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Captain Nash DeCost And The Liverpool Packets



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MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

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Reynolds Printing, Inc.
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Captain Nash DeCost
And
The Liverpool Packets

BY

CLEMENT CLEVELAND SAWTELL

THE MARINE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

Dedicated to

ADELAIDE IMLAY SAWTELL

whose effective research
and helpful criticism have
made these pages possible

FOREWORD

The early American shipmasters were men of many parts. While they became specialists of a sort in adopting a coasting, ocean-packet, or whaling trade, they were pretty much of the same school in that they combined qualities of self reliance, leadership and ability to handle their ships well as their crews. Called upon to meet many emergencies they were seldom found wanting.

It was this breed of ship commander which gave the young American nation its ascendancy in world trade. The careers of men like Nash DeCost are valuable in studying the philosophy of the times as well as the economic success through maritime pursuits.

A contemporary comment concerning these early packets and their masters comes from William Cobbett, in *The Emigrants Guide*, London, 1829. He provided little doubt as to his comparisons, as he wrote the following:

"The ship will be no other than an American one, if you wish for a *quick* and a *safe* passage. The Americans sail *faster* than others, owing to the greater *skill* and greater *vigilance* of the captains, and to their great sobriety and the wise rules that they observe with regard to their men. They carry *more sail* than other ships; because the captain is everlastingly looking out. I have crossed the Atlantic three times in American ships, once in an English merchant ship, once in a king's ship, and once in a king's packet; and I declare, that the superiority of the Americans is indeed, so decisive, that, if I were going to cross again, nothing should prevail on me to go on board of any ship but an American one. I never knew an American captain *take off his clothes to go to bed, during the whole voyage*; and I never knew any other who did not do it. The consequence of this great watchfulness is, that, advantage is taken of every puff of wind, while the risk from the squalls and sudden gusts is, in a great measure, obviated."

Captain Nash DeCost's story embraces the days when the Western Ocean sailing packets were enjoying the popular full tide of successful voyaging. During this period (roughly including the years 1815 to 1840) the packets carried the majority of passengers, mail and quality freight which passed from Europe to America and from the Old World to the New. The inherent ability of the men who commanded these packets is reflected by the story which follows:

Edouard A. Stackpole, Curator, Mystic Seaport

10-2-67
1.0
Stackpole



CAPTAIN NASH DECOST

After a portrait by Charles Loring Elliott, New York 1845

CHAPTER I

Early Days.

The year 1783 which saw the recognition of our independence also saw the birth of Nash DeCost in the Fairhaven section of Dartmouth, Massachusetts. It may have been the year itself that endowed him with an independent and self reliant character. The ebb and flow of the tide in the harbour brought him his first smell of salt and the steady southwest breeze of Buzzards Bay that rocked his cradle brought him the sound of waves and the cry of sea birds. It seemed that he chose the 6th of February to arrive which is a poor month in our New England seaports. But at least two celebrated Americans were born in that month without being the worse for it and neither was Nash DeCost.

His father, John DeCost, and his mother, Abigail Peas (Pease) were married at Dartmouth during the troublesome times of the Revolution not long after John Paul Jones brought his prizes into that port and recruited Dartmouth men to man the *Providence*. The marriage was duly recorded, and the original entry may still be found at the New Bedford City Hall.

DeCost	Bristol S. S. Dartmouth, November 7th day
Peas	1777. Then joined in marriage John DeCost, a transient man, and Abigail Peas of Dartmouth.

Witness Benjamin Akin
Justice of the Peace

Where the "transient man" hailed from or what may have been his vocation has not been established, but the story persists that he or his forbears crossed to this Country from Genoa. By the same token the record of John DeCost's death is missing; however, as his widow, Abigail DeCost, married Nathaniel Far on July 25, 1784, it may be assumed that John DeCost died between 1782 and 1784; all of which agrees with Nash DeCost's own story that he was left an orphan.

Another New Bedford record throws some light on the family.

John DeCost, deceased 24 November 1797 on board Sch. Eliza,
Jirah Kempton.

This John DeCost was very likely an older brother of Nash DeCost, and he also seems to have followed the sea. No other DeCosts are mentioned in the early Dartmouth or New Bedford records, so there is nothing to show that there were any more DeCost children.

Next to nothing is known about Captain DeCost's boyhood, but it is generally conceded that at an early age he put to sea, and like many New Bedford lads threw in his lot with the whalers. In writing of him on February 2, 1858, the *New York Journal of Commerce* says "By indomitable perserverance and energy, he pushed himself ahead, without influential friends, and while 'before the mast' in the whaling service made himself prominent by his daring and dangerous exploits."

This statement conjures up a picture of a fearless youth voyaging the seven seas from Tristan Da Cunha to the Indian Ocean, from the Indian Ocean to the Japan Trough, and thence around Cape Horn to good old New Bedford; a picture of harpooning, "Nantucket sleigh-rides," stove boats, thirst, careening on forgotten islands, and months and months at sea. All these things he must have seen, and with them he acquired sea lore and a knowledge of navigation, which was to lift him head and shoulders above most of his companions of the forecastle.

That these facts must be true is revealed by the known fact that by the time he was twenty Nash DeCost had joined the ranks of New Bedford sea captains. In 1803 he was both master and part owner of the ship *Joseph*,¹ a vessel of 241 tons. Next followed the brig *Hazard*² in which he held the captain's berth and also the captain's share in 1804.

With this record of achievement he felt justified in making an important commitment, and took time out in 1805 to marry Betsey Wilber at Middleboro. Betsey Wilber was domiciled in New Bedford or Dartmouth in 1803 but had apparently moved to Middleboro, where they were married, as the town records of intentions and marriages show. We like to think of the hearty young Captain in his best blue suit travelling by stage across the April countryside to

his wedding, perhaps a little impatient with the progress of the vehicle.

By her own testimony Betsey Wilbur was a Quaker, so it is somewhat puzzling to find that the Rev. Samuel Abbott of the Fourth Baptist Church officiated. Facts are facts, however, and as such must be accepted regardless of interpretation. So Betsey and Nash DeCost — spelled DeCoast in the Middleboro record — became man and wife on April 10, 1805, and, we suspect, immediately made their wedding journey back to New Bedford which was to be their home.

In those days sea captains often carried their brides to sea with them, and it is just possible that Betsey sailed out of port in her husband's new command, the fine ship *Averick*³ just launched at Westport. To what ports the *Averick* sailed on this first voyage is a mystery, although from one she brought back a handsome Liverpool ware pitcher, depicting on one surface in lovely colors a



LIVERPOOL PITCHER OF SHIP AVERICK

Commanded in 1805 by Capt. Nash DeCost

view of the *Averick* under full sail and under the spout the initials of Betsey and Nash DeCost. The mate to this pitcher, carrying the initials of the ship's owners, is still to be seen at the Old Dartmouth Historical Society and Whaling Museum.

In the following January, Betsey's first child, John DeCost, was born, only to die in infancy. Thus, a cloud of sorrow spread across their horizon. About this same time, Captain DeCost completed his plan to own a house and land on Clark's Point, for the Registry of Deeds at New Bedford shows that on January 12, 1807, Nash DeCost of New Bedford, "mariner", purchased from Peleg Allen, for \$4,781.25, a parcel of land of seventy-six acres on Clark's Point, being the site of the present Alms-House. As the deed mentions no buildings, Captain DeCost must have built the house in which his family lived until 1822 and doubtless entertained his friends and neighbors at a gala house warming.

And what a location for a sea captain's house! Every ship entering or leaving New Bedford harbour passed within half a mile of his waterfront. From her doorstep Betsey and her growing family saw DeCost ships go down to the sea year after year and watched their topsails coming home; they had the last view of them and the first view of them, and the inescapable thrill that went with each.

On the heels of prosperity troubles were brewing for shipping people as a class, troubles of a political nature which were to stagnate maritime activity. In 1807 the Embargo was proclaimed by President Thomas Jefferson, and deep water captains found themselves making the best of a bad situation in the coasting trade.

So it was in 1808 that Captain DeCost was waving farewell to his family from the deck of the sloop *Butler* bound for New York, and later in the year from the trim schooner *Industry*, which he was to sail on a number of voyages to Norfolk, Charlestown, and Bath. Maritime New Bedford celebrated the second anniversary of the Embargo by flying the flag on the Fairhaven bridge at half mast with the emblem reversed. If Captain DeCost followed suit aboard his schooner, no mention is made of it.

CHAPTER II

The Ship Euphrates — 1809 — 1818

By 1809 things were looking up again, and Nash DeCost received command of the new ship *Euphrates*,¹ built of oak from Naushon Island, and just launched by the Hillman brothers. With this promising beginning she cleared from New Bedford for Savannah on June 23, 1809, almost before her paint was dry. This evidently was a trial spin, for on July 28, 1809, we find her sailing from New York for Rangoe, to be reported thirty-nine days later at Madeira, bound for the East Indies.

Fourteen months elapsed before New York saw the *Euphrates* again. On September 28, 1810, the *New York Evening Post* reported her below, 147 days from Calcutta, and on October 1st she docked with a cargo of piece goods valued at "upwards of \$500,000.", mostly for Elias Kane & Co. On landing Captain DeCost brought news of the proposed British expedition against the Isle of France and a list of the ships at Calcutta at the time of his departure. He also described his own experience of falling in, near the Isle of France, with a large ship of war, which gave chase for forty-eight hours until the *Euphrates* finally made good her escape under cover of the night.

The log of this chase would make interesting reading were it available. Captain DeCost knew the value of his cargo and consequently what the stakes were. If the *Euphrates* ever carried sail, it is safe to say that she did so on that occasion. Things of this sort, however, were all in the day's work, and the American sea captain of that period was expected to take in his stride French and British frigates, press gangs, and Malay pirates as they came.

With the command of the *Euphrates* came a turning point in the Captain's career which, with a few exceptions, seems to have narrowed down to a series of voyages to Liverpool.

In spite of strained relations between the United States and Great Britain, the Liverpool traders plied back and forth across the Atlantic all through this period, and as a consequence many of them were in Liverpool when the War of 1812 finally broke out. As it



Ship Euphrates of New Bedford, Commanded by Nath DeCost 1809-1848
from a painting by Montardier, Havre, (Courtesy of Llewellyn Howland.)

happened Captain DeCost cleared from that port on July 16, just five days before the British Government announced that it had received the American declaration of war. No doubt the Captain had a good idea of what was in the wind when he set out for New York and did his best to give the British frigates a wide berth.

On August 19, 1812, the *Euphrates* had made a good passage, and was approaching the American coast, when the *Constitution* was engaged in whipping the *Guerriere*. Captain DeCost may have heard the sound of their guns; but whether or no, as luck would have it, four days later the *Euphrates*, to the chagrin of her Captain, was taken by the American privateer schooner *Rossie*,¹⁸ Com. Joshua Barney. The capture of the *Euphrates* by an American privateer seems to have an ironical side, but there was nothing Captain DeCost could do about it. A prize master and crew were put aboard, and the *Euphrates* was carried into Newport, Rhode Island, where she arrived for adjudication on September 3. A libel was then filed against a part of the cargo belonging to British citizens, although none was filed against the vessel.⁵

The War of 1812, with its blockade of our seaports, generally speaking, laid up the bulk of American shipping. Along with the rest was the good ship *Euphrates*. It was not a popular war with New England, as history records. Like the inhabitants of other seaport towns in the area, the New Bedford folk declined to fit out privateers, choosing rather to devote their energies to self-defense. Several gunboats were put in commission, Fort Phoenix was strengthened, and a company of soldiers under Captain Reuben Swift was stationed on Clark's Point. The militia was also active in the town, and Captain DeCost made his contribution as a private in Barstow's company of foot.

As a result of all these preparations the DeCost house on Clark's Point suddenly found itself in the center of a military encampment, and the Captain and his family were right in the thick of it. Moreover, the situation was rather more than exciting, for not a great many years back a British expedition had come ashore at the very spot to march through the town, over the bridge and out to Sconticut Neck, burning and destroying property as it went. When three British vessels of war, the *Victorious*, *Endymion*, and *Peacock* were reported in Vineyard Sound in 1814, the people of Clark's Point hastened to

pack up their prized possessions and move them inland to points of greater safety. As Nash DeCost found himself in an extremely vulnerable position, it is more than likely that he bundled his family and treasures into whatever vehicles were handy and saw them to a more secure refuge. Fortunately for the DeCosts and for New Bedford no raid materialized, and all the precautions proved unnecessary, although the threat remained till the end of the War.

With the close of hostilities Captain DeCost got the *Euphrates* to sea again for Liverpool, and on September 11 of that year gave his family quite a shock by bringing her into New Bedford in distress, having suffered considerable damage during a gale.

New Bedford Mercury Monday September 11 1815

Arrived ship *Euphrates*, DeCost, 49 days from Liverpool with drygoods, hardware, crates, etc. bound to Philadelphia—Put into this port in distress having lost his main mast and sails in the gale of the first inst.

Ironically enough, Captain DeCost chose to enter New Bedford just in time for the now famous hurricane of September 29, 1815, which wrought complete havoc all through this section. The tide rose very rapidly to a level of ten feet above normal high water. Buildings were washed out to sea, wharfs demolished, the Fairhaven bridge carried away and many vessels cast ashore. Undoubtedly, therefore, the *Euphrates* suffered some further damage, but had repaired sufficiently to survive her second trial. Captain DeCost had the advantage of being present to help Betsey and the children in their exposed position on Clark's Point.

Repairs were completed and the *Euphrates* managed to get to sea on Saturday, October 7, to resume her voyage to Philadelphia. After that she seems for the most part to have settled down to the business of trading between Liverpool and New York for Fish and Grinnell, or modifications of the Fish, Grinnell, Minturn, and Post combinations.

Her owners' chief concern was shipping a paying cargo, so she did not attempt a regular schedule; nevertheless, she was popular with cabin passengers who at times exceeded fourteen, while as many as thirty are known to have travelled steerage in a single voyage. For a regular trader the *Euphrates* was a relatively fast ship,

being reported on four occasions to have made the westward passage in thirty-two or three days, and on another voyage, in April 1819, under perfect conditions, she made the same run in twenty-one days.⁶ This record, however, was apparently achieved by Captain Stoddard who succeeded Captain DeCost towards the end of 1818.

On one or two subsequent occasions the *Euphrates* filled in for Fish & Grinnell as a scheduled packet ship. In 1827, she began a long career as a whaler, which was not terminated till 1865, when she was captured by the Confederate Steamer *Shenandoah* and left in a mass of flames off Cape Thaddeus.⁷

After retiring as master of the *Euphrates* in 1818 Nash DeCost seems to have marked time till his next important command. On August 20, 1819, we find him filling in as master of the schooner *Fenelon*,⁸ while on April 10, 1820, he brought the brig *William Thacher*⁹ into New Bedford loaded with salt, thirty-seven days from Lisbon.

LIVERPOOL PACKETS.

THE subscribers have established the following ships as a line of packets between this port and Liverpool, to leave this port on the 8th, and Liverpool on the 24th of each month in the year, viz :



Ship **ROBERT FULTON**,
Henry Holdridge, master, to sail 8th
December.



Ship **CORTES**,
Nash De Cost, master, to sail 8th Jan-
uary.



New ship **CORINTHIAN**,
G. W. Davis, master, to sail 8th Feb-
ruary.



New ship **LEEDS**,
—————, master, to sail 8th
March.

These ships are about 400 tons each, built of the best materials, copper fastened and coppered, commanded by men experienced in this trade, and no expense will be spared in making their accommodations convenient and comfortable for passengers. The price of passage in the cabin is 35 guineas; for which sum, beds, bedding, wines and stores of the first quality are furnished. For freight or passage, apply to the captains on board, to

**FISH & GRINNELL, 138 Front st. or
THADDEUS PHELPS & Co.**

no 20

South street.

CHAPTER III

The Ship Cortes — 1821 — 1826

Liverpool trading must have been relatively profitable for the Fish and Grinnell interests, for in 1820 they saw fit to expand by building and putting into service the "very elegant" ship *Cortes*, which Captain DeCost sailed into New York in ballast June 6, 1820, forty-eight hours from New Bedford. Their enterprise did not, however, stop there. By the middle of 1822, with the *Cortes* and the *Robert Fulton* as a nucleus, they had followed the lead of other ship owners to form a fourth line of packet ships to Liverpool with scheduled sailing dates advertised in advance, which they called the Swallowtail Line.

Thus, we find Captain DeCost on September 8, 1822, in the new role of packet ship master, taking the *Cortes* out of New York to try her mettle with the Black Ball Line. His long experience in the Liverpool trade eminently qualified him for this post, as he knew the ins and outs of north Atlantic and Irish Sea navigation as well as he knew the palm of his hand.

The New York Evening Post commenting on the new line and its ships on July 30, 1822, writes:

"The ships which are named to compose the line are first rate vessels and have excellent accommodations."

A glimpse at the passenger lists of the *Cortes* shows that she was able to carry at least eighteen in the cabin, while the Registry of Ships at the New Bedford Custom House gives her measurements and ownership.

Name	Cortes
Rig	Ship
Hailing Port	New Bedford
Register	June 5 1820
Built at	New Bedford
Tonnage	382 24/95
Length	106' 6"

Breadth	28' 6"
Depth	14' 3"
Master	Nash DeCost
Owners	Cornelius Grinnell, merchant, James Howland, William Howland, Nash DeCost, Abraham Gifford, New Bedford; Isaac Howland, Thomas Winslow, Pardon Gifford, Westport; Preserved Fish, Joseph Grinnell, New York.
Remarks	2 decks; 3 masts; square stern; no galleries, a billet head.
Master Carpenter	Abraham Gifford
Surveyor	Eli Haskell

An inkling of what the cabin of the *Cortes* was like is given by Joseph R. Anthony of New Bedford who visited her during a stay in New York. In his diary he writes on Monday, May 5, 1823:

"Cousin Tom and myself took a long walk and then went to J. Grinnell's to accompany Sally, Sarah, Mary Minturn and Mary A. Russell on board the *Cortes*, to partake of a collation. Her cabin is fitted up in grand style — red damask curtains, a great deal of gilt work and every thing in the neatest order."

Beyond these scant bits we have little information concerning the *Cortes* except brief notices of her in the marine lists of the newspapers. Thanks to *The New York Evening Post* we know that she could hustle right along if given a chance. On March 22, 1824, Captain DeCost brought her into New York, twenty-four days from Liverpool, which was good sailing and quite a contrast to her April voyage in 1822, which ran into fifty-one days before she got inside Sandy Hook. Another note in the Marine List of December 11, 1822, printed in *The New York Evening Post* chronicles loss of life aboard the *Cortes*:

"Nov. 8, lost from the main topsail yard, John Quin, seaman, a native of England."

A similar casualty is reported in the March 9, 1821, edition:

"Feb. 10. Lat. 44, Long. 37.58, James Jamieson, seaman, fell from the main top and was drowned."

Often the *Cortes* brought the latest foreign news to New York, and when she did the newspapers were careful to acknowledge it.

Thus, on July 6, 1821, when the *Cortes* arrived twenty-six days from Liverpool, we find this recognition in *The New York Evening Post*:

"By the fine fast sailing ship *Cortes*, DeCoste, from Liverpool we have received London papers to the 8th . . ."

A like acknowledgement turns up in an 1824 number of the same paper.

"Friday December 3 1824 — Latest from England — The packet ship *Cortes*, Capt. Decost, arrived here this morning from Liverpool, whence she sailed on Sunday the 24th October. By her we have received our London files to the evening of the 22nd, and Liverpool of the 23d of that month. The Hon. John Randolph came passenger in the *Cortes*, and will shortly proceed to Washington to take his seat as a member of Congress."

Another passenger who deserves mention was the Captain's lady, Betsey DeCost, who sailed for Liverpool in the *Cortes* on May 8, 1825, and returned in her on August 13 of the same year. Nor did she come back empty handed, for the passenger list shows that Mrs. Nash DeCost brought with her a servant who was doubtless one of those "green girls" our ancestors so often took from Ireland to train as domestics.

The packet ship captains had the privilege of taking their families on their ships from time to time, and Nash DeCost was not one to overlook his wife and children. So it was that Betsey made a number of voyages with her husband, and it was owing to these occasional trips that she became a friend of the Grosvenor family in England. There are no letters testifying to this friendship, but there was a doll's house with complete furnishings sent by Lady Grosvenor to the DeCost children; also, there is a painting of Betsey DeCost done in England, probably in the eighteen twenties. The story goes that Lady Grosvenor and Betsey had similar bonnets made against the painting of their portraits, bonnets which Betsey thought rather worldly for a Quaker, and that they sat for the same artist who unfortunately is nameless.

Betsey DeCost may not have been given to writing verse, as was one lady who crossed in the *Cortes*. This passenger celebrated the voyage and the gratitude of the passengers in four appreciative stanzas which finally found their way into a *Skaneateles*, New York, news-



BETSEY DeCOST

After a portrait painted in England

paper. This lady passenger, a Mrs. Lyman, of Boston, crossed the Atlantic in the *Cortes* in 1825. She later presented Captain and Mrs. DeCost with a pair of beautiful silver goblets. Her verses, taken from an old New York newspaper, read as follows:

"To Capt. DeCost of the packet-ship *Cortes*

"The thirty-ninth day is flying fast—
The happiest-saddest — and the last—
Which we on board your ship have passed
Our Captain"

"So fast recedes the water blue
So bursts our native land in view
To thee our warmest thanks are due
Our Captain"

"A bounteous heaven our wants discried
And o'er the warring ocean's tide
It gave DeCost to be our guide
Our Captain"

"We cannot part without a sigh
From him whose wakeful anxious eye
Hath watched the wind and scanned the sky
Our Captain"

Like the *Euphrates*, the ship *Cortes* was finally withdrawn from the packet service to enter the whale fishery. She commenced operating in this field in 1828 and continued till March 1858, when, like the *Euphrates*, she met with a violent end, albeit, at the hands of her crew, who, for reasons of their own, burned her with three hundred barrels of oil off Cape Crusade.

Until 1822 Nash DeCost had made his home at New Bedford. This is shown by the Registry of Ships which lists Nash DeCost of New Bedford as one of the owners of the *Cortes*.¹⁰ In that year, however, it appears from the Registry of Deeds at New Bedford that Captain DeCost, for \$3,200. and other considerations, sold to Perry Russell, Cordwainer, two pieces of land at Clark's Point amounting to about seventy-six acres. The deed to this property was given April 26, 1822, by Nash and Betsey DeCost who shortly afterwards gave an affidavit concerning the matter in New York City. Another transaction between the same persons took place on June 8, 1822, when Perry Russell of New Bedford sold to Nash DeCost, Master

Mariner, for \$1,200, a lot of land and buildings adjoining the land of Cornelius Grimmell in the southerly part of the Village of Bedford.

Perhaps the purchase of land and buildings in the Village of Bedford was a part of the preceding deal, and perhaps Nash DeCost planned to live on his newly acquired land, but if so, he changed his mind, for on February 1, 1823, we find him a resident of Poughkeepsie, New York, selling to David Wilbur of Dartmouth for \$1,000, the property so recently acquired.¹¹

What moved Captain DeCost to give up his New Bedford home may only be surmised, but it is quite possible that he found his duties as master of a packet ship taking up enough of his time between voyages to preclude the long trips to New Bedford and back. Also his star was in the ascendant; he was making new friends and connections; he was becoming a fairly prominent figure in maritime circles, and it was fitting that his family should share his laurels.

The Captain's family, by the way, was assuming sizable proportions. Six children in all were to be reckoned with in any move; Albert and Franklin had arrived before 1812, to be followed by their sisters Eliza, Pamela, Sarah, and Abby, at intervals of about two years. Here was a handful for even a packet captain to manage, and add to that the servants and all the baggage, the problem became a major one.

Born to the sea, Nash DeCost probably let the sea carry his household to New York. If this was his solution of the problem there were two choices; they could all have embarked on one of the reliable sloops, such as the *Experiment*, the *Rodman*, or the *Ann*, mentioned by Joseph R. Anthony in his diary as sailing back and forth between New Bedford and New York, or they could have driven to Newport and there embarked for New York on the steamboat. The *Anthony Diary* states that Captain DeCost left New Bedford March 18, 1823, for New York via Newport, so this may have been his favorite way of making the trip, and, that being the case, he very likely took his family down in the same manner the year before.

Even today a child's first night aboard a steamer is a great adventure. With staterooms, bunks, decks, dining saloon, and engines, in 1822 the steamboat was still a relatively new and terrible thing, even to grown persons, many of whom had never laid eyes on

one. Imagine, then, the excitement of the little DeCosts, to say nothing of the problem of their parents in keeping them from falling overboard, or getting temporarily lost, and above all the difficulty of seeing them all to bed as a prelude to a rather active night.

Once the family arrived in New York, it was merely a question of transferring to the river steamer, which, barring engine trouble, could set them ashore at Poughkeepsie within a few hours.

Although Poughkeepsie was more accessible to New York than New Bedford had been, it was still a long way from South Street where the packet ships berthed, so another move, to New York itself, followed. In short the Poughkeepsie phase seems to have been a temporary one for the Captain's family. This journey up the Hudson to the bustling city must have taken place towards the end of 1823. Nash DeCost was in New York City in time to be listed in the 1824 City Directory as shipmaster, residing on Broome near Suffolk Street.

From her new home Betsey could take the children to the Battery to watch the *Cortes* pass into the East River on her return from Liverpool, and how proud they must have been to point out father's ship. Then they could run down to Whitehall Dock to see the steamer bring the Captain and passengers ashore. And, best of all, between voyages they could make never to be forgotten pilgrimages with Papa along South Street under the rows of long bowsprits. There would be the Black Ball ship *Orbit* at her wharf, the *Manchester*, the good old *Euphrates*, and above all the beloved *Cortes*. There would be captains and mates and sailors to talk to, yarns to hear, the hoisting in and out of cargoes, and the tarring down of rigging to watch. There would be exciting smells to smell, and new sounds to hear. Finally, there was the Captain's own cabin aboard the *Cortes* to visit, and perhaps there would be surprises. The return voyage usually could be counted on to bring presents; silver candle sticks or a tea urn for Betsey, dolls, fans, and London dresses for the girls, and perhaps jackknives, or a ship model for the boys. Happy days they must have been, and the Captain, his wife, and children a happy family.

Shortly after establishing his household on Broome Street, Captain DeCost was elected to membership in The Marine Society of the City of New York; to be exact, on April 12, 1824. Before coming to New York to live he already ranked high in his profession, and

his frank and agreeable manner had won him many friends, with the result that his fellow sea captains lost no time in welcoming him into their inner circle.

The DeCost family continued at the Broome Street residence at least through 1826, and while they may have moved at some time to other locations, we know that they remained in New York for a number of years. On September 5, 1828, for example, the third certificate of Registry of the ship *York* lists Nash DeCost as one of her owners residing in the City.

CHAPTER IV

The Packet Ship York and Her Owners

Captain DeCost's final and most important command was the Fish & Grinnell packet ship *York*. Under his guidance she made the run between New York and Liverpool six times a year with signal success from the beginning of 1826 to the spring of 1830.

She was built of live oak by William Crockett and launched from his New York yard towards the end of 1824; probably on October 2 and some description of her is to be found in the *Registry of Ships* at the New York Customs House under date of March 18, 1825.

Ship *York*

2 decks and 3 masts

Length 118 ft. 6 inches

Breadth 28 ft. 6 inches

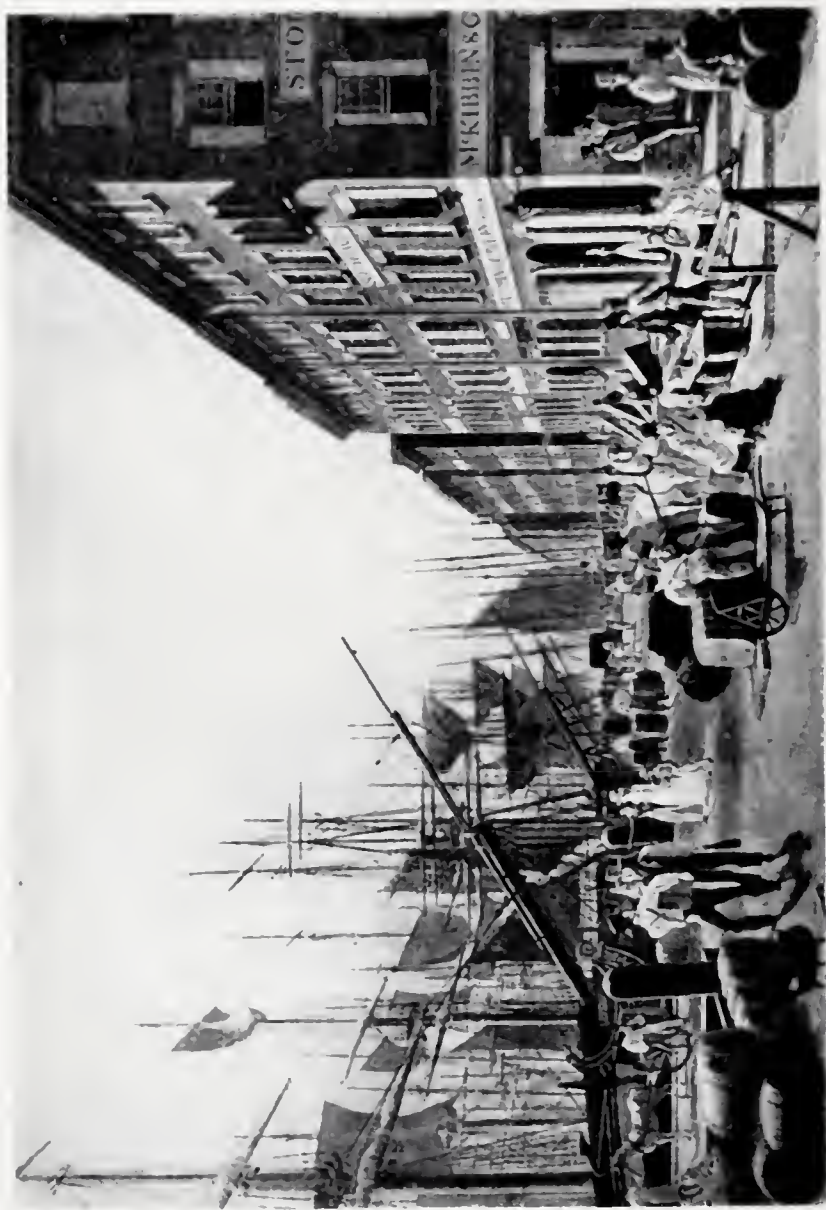
Depth 14 ft. 3 inches

Measures 433 & 46/95 tons

Remarks Square stern, round tuck,
no galleries, and a billet head.

While the builder's specifications called for a simple billet head rather than an elaborate figurehead, the ship carver was given some latitude in decorating the square stern, if we may believe the *New York Evening Post* for March 12, 1825. "The carvings on her stern," says that paper in speaking of the *York*, "represent the City of York, two female figures, a sheaf of wheat, and other emblems of agriculture and commerce, neatly gilt."¹²

At one time Captain DeCost owned a drawing of the *York*, executed, it is said, by her first mate while sojourning between voyages in the Liverpool jail. The drawing, which bore the title "Ship *York*, Nash DeCost, Preceding up The Mersey" has unfortunately been lost, and no other picture of her has been located to date. In the absence of an artist's testimony, however, it is probably fair to assume that the *York* in general appearance resembled her sisters of four hundred tons, notably the Fish & Grinnell packet ship *Leeds*



Note the packet ship *Leeds* in the foreground

of which Captain DeCost was part owner and those of the Black Ball Line. Prints of some of these ships have been preserved and reproduced from time to time in various books and magazines, among which might be mentioned "The Western Ocean Packets" by B. Lubbock and "Square Riggers on Schedule" by R. G. Albion.

A detailed description of the *York* below decks, or at least the part sacred to the cabin passengers, appears in the *Liverpool Albion* for February 13, 1826, in an account copied by the *New York Evening Post* April 4 following. Admiration crops out in every line of it; so much so, that one suspects Captain DeCost, or his agents, of sitting late with the editor over a bottle or so of fine port. Perhaps the wording is a bit extravagant for modern taste, but this fault is redeemed to some extent by unconscious humor. Be that as it may, we shall let *Albion* speak for itself.

"To the vessels forming the fourth line of packets to New York a new ship has just been added, called the *York*. The ship, whether for beauty of naval architecture, or elegance of interior finish is excelled by none of the most celebrated vessels composing the line to which she belongs, or even those forming the other lines to New York. Of this beautiful vessel we shall now give a description. Let the reader imagine himself on the deck of the *York*. The house before you is denominated the *round-house*, though, by the by, it happens to be *square*. Having entered it, you find the floor covered with a carpet, and the walls (if we may so name them) covered with views of charming American scenery. You descend to the Cabin by a handsome flight of steps, with mahogany hand rails. Before you, when you reach the bottom, is a very elegant sideboard, formed of beautiful mahogany, and surrounded by brass railing. In the center is a small library, all the books of which are bound. Well, you are now in the cabin. It is an apartment forty feet in length by sixteen in breadth, and contains no less than twenty births; that is, bedrooms for passengers. A mahogany table, with seats to correspond, occupies the center of the stateroom.¹³ The sides of the cabin are ornamented with the finest cabinet work. Twenty four handsome pillars, formed of red wood, finished in imitation of ornamented bronze, and surmounted with elegant gilt caps, mark the division of births, the doors of which are formed by mahogany and birds' eye maple, beautifully disposed in panels, and finished in the most exquisite style. Each door has a Venetian blind, which, whilst it admits the air into the birth, prevents the inmate from being seen without. Nothing

IN PURSUANCE of an ACT of the CONGRESS of the United States of America, entitled "An Act concerning the registering and recording of Ships or Vessels."

(SD)
Signed
J. F.
Kitt

Nash DeCost of the City, County & State of New York. Master —
having taken or subscribed the Affirmation required by the said Act, and having affirmed — that he together with Joseph Ginnell, Henry Ginnell, Moses H Ginnell & Sarah Lister of said City & James Howland, Cornelius Ginnell & Joseph Richardson of New Bedford & Stephen Howland of Westport State of Massachusetts are the only Owners of the Ship or Vessel called the *SWK* — of *SWK* — whereof he, said *Nash DeCost* is at present Master, and a Citizen of the United States,

and that the said Ship or Vessel was built at the City of *New York* in the Year 1824 as per Register No 5 issued at this Port on the 5th January 1826 — nor diminished the property being changed in part —

And *J. Ferry De Surgeon*

of this District — having certified that the said Ship or Vessel has — *Two* decks and *Three* masts and that her length is *One hundred eighty feet six inches* — her breadth *Twenty eight feet six inches* — her length *One hundred feet three inches* — and that she measures *Four hundred thirty three* ¹⁶⁶/₉₅ tons,

that she is a *Square sterned* Ship — has *round* ^{stuck} *no* ^{gallies} and *a* ^{Billet} *head*: And the said *Nash DeCost* — having agreed to the description and admeasurement above specified, and sufficient security having been given, according to the said Act, the said Ship has been duly registered at the Port of *New York*

(SD)
Signed
J. F.
Kitt

Given under my Hand and Seal at the Port of *New York* this *Fifth* day of *September* in the Year one thousand eight hundred and *twenty eight*

can exceed the beauty, we might even say the splendour of this room, when viewed from the after part of the cabin; and the spectator is astonished at beholding such a specimen of cabinet work on board of a ship intended for conveyance of merchandise. We venture to say, that there is not a room in any palace on *terra firma* that is fitted up with greater elegance than the cabin of the *York*. The births, as we stated above, amount in number to twenty. They are replete with every accommodation for the ease and comfort of the inhabitant. The curtains are of India silk, with a yellow fringe of the same material; the wash-stands are so constructed that they answer the purpose of desks also; and the floors of the births, as well as the floor of the cabin, are covered with Turkey carpets. The mizen mast, which runs through the center of the cabin, is finely bronzed, and surmounted by a gilt cap; and a bronze wreath fills up the divisions around the ceiling of the state room. Elegant as this apartment is, we will now pass into one which rivals it in beauty. This is the *Ladies' Cabin*. It is nearly a square; and contains four births, fitted up with every accommodation for the female passenger. The two sides of this apartment resemble those of the main cabin and have an equally handsome appearance. The other two sides are formed of mahogany exclusively. It is formed into elegant compartments, and has the finest polish imaginable. A piano forte, of peculiar, but handsome, construction, occupies one side of the cabin, and a sofa, covered with crimson moreen, the other. Two large mirrors are placed on each side of the piano forte; and the opposite side of the apartment is wholly occupied by a splendid pier glass. The mirrors are placed exactly opposite to the two doors of the cabin, and present as beautiful *dioramic* views of the sections of the cabin as we ever beheld. The *tout ensemble* of the ladies cabin is charming, and enough, of itself, to tempt some of our fair readers to take a trip to New York for the pleasure of occupying so elegant an apartment. A well selected library¹³ is among the accommodations of the *York*; and a printed catalogue of the books it contains is hung up in the ship for the information of the passengers. The steward's pantry, not the least important apartment in the ship, is filled with every thing necessary for the table, and no pantry on shore can excell it in the number or variety of its culinary and table utensils.

The *York* is 450 tons burthen; and she is not more remarkable for her elegance than her strength and solidity. The stancheons are of locust wood, and the combings of the hatchways of mahogany. Betwixt decks every thing bears the mark of solidity and strength. There are stringers above and below

T *LIVERPOOL PACKETS.*

HE subscribers have established the following ships as a line of packets between this port and Liverpool, to leave this port on the 8th, and Liverpool on the 24th of each month in the year, viz :—



Ship **YORK**,
Nash De Cost, master, to sail 8th of
January.



SHIP **CORINTHIAN**,
George Davis, master, to sail 8th of
February.



SHIP **LEEDS**,
William Stoddard, master, to sail 8th
of March.



SHIP **SILAS RICHARDS**,
Henry Holdredge, master, to sail 8th
of April.

The ships are about 400 tons each, built of the best materials, copper fastened and coppered, commanded by men experienced in the trade, and no expense will be spared in making their accommodations convenient and comfortable for passengers. Beds, bedding, wines and stores of the first quality are furnished. For freight or passage, apply to the captains on board, to

FISH, GRINNELL & CO.

136 Front-street, or

T. PHELPS & CO. 47 South-st.

j4

of unusual dimensions, fitted with uncommon nicety of workmanship, and the whole bound together with immense iron knees diagonally. The height betwixt decks is about six feet six inches; the ceiling is caulked so as to afford every comfort and accommodation to the steerage passengers. Betwixt decks are two large tanks, the water contained in which is raised on deck by a small moveable pump, which occupies scarcely any room.

The *York* is commanded by Captain Nash DeCost, formerly of the *Cortes*, a skilful and experienced seaman and a man highly respected by all who have had the pleasure of his acquaintance. He and his officers take pride in showing the *York* to visitors. She now lies at the southeast corner of Prince's Dock."

Like most of the packet ships she was owned by a number of persons, though presumably the partners in the firm held the largest interest. Messrs Fish & Grinnell, however, were shrewd ship owners and operators, and, as such, they were careful to see that their captains held a share in the ships they commanded. This plan seems to have worked very well, for the master, as a part owner, had a stake in every voyage, and he seldom failed to put his best foot foremost. Thus, we find Captain DeCost listed among the owners in the *York's* third certificate of registry which fortunately has been preserved. Nine persons are recorded as owners:

"Nash DeCost, Joseph Grinnell, Henry Grinnell, Moses Grinnell, and David Leslie, all of New York City; James Howland, Cornelius Grinnell, and Joseph Ricketson, all of New Bedford, Massachusetts; Stephen Howland of Westport, Massachusetts."

Although the *York* made her reputation as a Liverpool packet, she nevertheless appears to have made a number of voyages to London. Early mention of her occurs in the *New York Spectator* for October 8, 1824, prematurely advertising her sailing for that port November 1 under William Baker, in as much as her maiden voyage, for one reason or another, was delayed till the following March.

Generally speaking such advertising was employed by the chief lines of the period with the result that one may follow the comings and goings of the *York*, as well as the other packets, by referring to the advertising and shipping columns of the press. Moreover, as the newspapers relied on these same packets for their latest foreign

scoops, they were always glad to give them publicity in their other pages. For example a press release is to be found in *The New York Evening Post* of March 12, 1825, eight days before the *York's* first sailing.

"*The London Packet ship York* — An elegant cold collation was given at 1 o'clock this day on board of this new, beautiful ship, to a number of the friends of her owners and the Captain. She is a first rate vessel, and surpasses any of the fine and costly ships, that we have seen, which compose the different lines of packets from this port to Europe. . . ."

After her maiden voyage we find her "snug" in London Dock, extending hospitality to the "nobility", and it must have been a grand fiesta, for a picturesque description of it finds its way into the log.

"*Ship York in London May 1825 Thur. 26.* The first part of this day being employed fitting the ship for the reception of the nobility — being ready all covered with awnings, the between decks clear & clean and well stored with every luxury.

"At 2 P.M. the guests were nearly assembled, when they soon partook of the feast while the band was playing upon deck for their amusement. After the feast was over, they soon formed cotillions around the ring bolts, and leading down at short intervals with a fine country dance, all jolly and merry, but no contentions. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 broke up the Party which consisted of about 250 Ladies and Gentlemen. So ends this day."

In the experience of the mate, who presumably was the painstaking scribe, parties without contentions deserved special mention, but perhaps he was more accustomed to the dockside tavern variety which nine times out of ten ended in a general brawl. Of course it may very well be that the mate was more impressed with the grandeur of the scene than was the sophisticated "nobility." But one thing is evident, the Yankees knew how to advertise their ships as well as to sail them.

CHAPTER V

Cargo, Crew and Passengers

When in her home port the *York* lay at Pine Street wharf discharging cargo and loading cotton consigned to Liverpool houses. But she was never allowed to remain idle for long. The interval between voyages was short, probably four or five weeks on the average, so the business of stowing cargo went forward with expedition. Moreover, the packets sailed on schedule, and there was no waiting for freight and favorable weather, after the manner of the regular traders. Snow, rain, sleet, hail, thunder and lightning, it was all the same to the packets, so long as the wind blew!

One of the necessary jobs during the interval between voyages was that of rounding up a crew. According to the prevailing custom, hands were shipped at New York for the voyage to Liverpool and return, in other words the round trip. When the packet reached her home port, the voyage was done, and the sailors were free to leave the ship. A berth on a packet was not considered an easy one in sailor town, consequently Captain DeCost was probably often obliged to start from scratch at the commencement of many a round trip, and at times it may have been a problem to find the proper number of men. Some doubtless shipped voluntarily, while others without question came aboard via the avenue of crimps and boarding house masters.

A few of the crew lists for this period remain among the Custom House records and may be found in the National Archives at Washington where they have been deposited for greater safety. One for the *York*, dated September 7, 1827, and signed by Nash DeCost, shows that on that occasion she carried a crew of twenty, including Jeremiah Andrews, first mate, and several blacks in the commissary department. Probably there is nothing remarkable about this particular crew, but it is interesting to see what a Yankee flavor it had; out of the twenty there are two British, two Scots and one Prussian. A larger percentage of British might well be expected on a ship plying back and forth on the Atlantic shuttle, and possibly a greater representation from the Baltic countries.



List of Persons, Company for the Ship York
Master M. P. Nash for the Ship York

NAMES	PLACES OF BIRTH	PLACES OF RESIDENCE	OF WHAT COUNTRY (CITIZEN OR SUBJECT)	DESCRIPTION OF THEIR PERSONS			
				Age	Height feet inches	Complexion	Hair
James Adams	Massachusetts			24	5	7	
David Gray	New York		United States	26	"	5 1/2	
Wm. James				21	"	5	
Edw. King	England		Great Britain	33	"	5 1/2	
Wm. Hayman	Massachusetts			35	"	4	
Richard Mervin	"		United States	26	"	7	
Samuel Du	New Hampshire			23	"	5 1/2	
Magnus Nelson	Pennsylvania			37	"	7	
Frederick Richards	Pennsylvania		Prussia	30	"	6 1/2	
John S. Miller	New York	City of New York		21	"	5	light brown
John Wilson	Pennsylvania	York	United States	31	"	6 1/2	
Charles Lytle	Liverpool		Great Britain	39	"	7 1/2	
Edw. Martin	New York		United States	23	"	4 1/2	
Wm. H. Nelson	Scotland		Great Britain	26	"	7	
Wm. H. Nelson	"			30	"	6	
Wm. H. Nelson	New York			21	"	5 1/2	
James Brown	Pennsylvania		United States	26	"	7	dark black
Richard Carter	New York			18	"	5 1/2	light brown
Frank Smith	South Carolina			37	"	5	dark black
Henry Lyons	Georgia			21	"	4	

James M. DeCost

I certify that the above named crew have all
 returned in the above named ship, Capt. David Mervin
 & that I have signed my
 Name this 1 Day of December 1827
John Mervin
 Capt.

A crew of twenty meant not more than ten men to a watch, which was not excessive, considering the amount of reefing and handling sail that went on aboard the packets. What the ideal number of men may have been for a ship of four hundred tons is hard to determine. Eben Parsons, testifying before a Massachusetts Committee on the subject of impressment in 1813, stated the number of men employed on his ships averaged six to every hundred tons of shipping, a figure confirmed both by William Parsons and Caleb Loring for their vessels. According to this rule of thumb of 1813 the *York* should have carried a crew of twenty-five or twenty-six rather than twenty. Evidence that this figure should fairly be applied to the *York* is, however, lacking. It may, nevertheless, be concluded that a crew of twenty was barely enough, and that the watch below was routed out frequently enough to make and shorten sail.

Perhaps, because of the long hours and hard work, seamen in this service were constantly jumping ship, although, to be sure, the sailor has always been a restless body, with half a mind to retire from the sea and half a mind to try another ship at the end of each voyage. Thus, we find the Port Officer at New York in December 1827 certifying (at the bottom of the *York's* crew list) that all but two of her hands have returned.

"I certify that the above named crew have all returned in the above named ship, except David Robertson & Wm. Harvy. In witness thereof I have signed my name this 1 day of December 1827.

John Woodward"

Further confirmation of the desertion of these two men appears on the reverse side of the same crew list:

"I, Mathew Maury, being duly authorized by James Maury, Consul of the United States of America for the Port of Liverpool and its dependencies do certify and make known to whom these presents shall come that Nash DeCost, Master of the within named Vessel, on the day of the date thereof, personally appeared at the office of this Consulate and made affirmation that the persons composing the crew of the said Vessel, as per the certified list do still continue serving in the same with the exception of David Robertson and Wm. Harvy who have de-

DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK—PORT OF NEW-YORK.

LIST OF MANIFEST

of all the Passengers taken on board the

Ship *Thos. DeWitt*

whereof

Nash DeCost is Master, from

Liverpool

Burthen

433 46

Tons

NAMES.	AGE.		SEX.	OCCUPATION.	The Country to which they severally belong.	The Country in which they intend to become inhabitants.	DIED ON THE VOYAGE.
	Years.	Months.					
<i>Arch. Briggs</i>	<i>45</i>		<i>male</i>	<i>Merchant</i>	<i>Sweden</i>	<i>New York</i>	
<i>C. M. Watkins</i>	<i>43</i>				<i>England</i>	"	
<i>C. Hale</i>	<i>27</i>			<i>Engineer</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>Canada</i>	
<i>A. De Campos</i>	<i>21</i>					<i>Mexico</i>	
<i>C. Potter</i>	<i>40</i>			<i>Merchant</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>	
<i>Wm. C. Hoge</i>	<i>25</i>			<i>M.D.</i>	<i>South Carolina</i>	<i>South Carolina</i>	
<i>John Abbott</i>	<i>21</i>			<i>Servant</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Canada</i>	
<i>W. Muckgore</i>	<i>30</i>				<i>Massachusetts</i>		
<i>C. Mungitope</i>	<i>16</i>		<i>female</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>	
<i>J. Douglass</i>	<i>28</i>		<i>male</i>	<i>Farmer</i>		<i>New York</i>	
<i>W. Platt</i>	<i>27</i>			<i>Mechanic</i>		<i>Massachusetts</i>	
<i>C. Welch</i>	<i>40</i>			<i>Servant</i>	<i>Ireland</i>	"	
<i>John Lee</i>	<i>56</i>				<i>England</i>	<i>New York</i>	
					<i>Spain</i>	<i>Spain</i>	

serted and that John Richardson and W. Watt have shipped in their places.

Given from under my hand and seal
of office at Liverpool the 24 day of
October 1827.

Mathew Maury"

By the time the sailing date rolled round, usually the 8th of the month for the Grinnell packets, the bales of cotton were safely stowed and the crew shipped, while the riggers had her fitted for sea and warped out to Staten Island to wait the steamboat carrying Captain DeCost with his flock of passengers and mail pouches. And the more the merrier from the Captain's point view, for in those days all the letter money and part of the passenger money went to line the captain's pocket.

If one may judge from notices in the press, passengers were apt to be tardy and consequently were given an eleventh hour reminder of the time and place of embarkation. Those who had booked to sail on September 8, 1829, for example, found in their *New York Evening Post* on the eve of departure a most timely warning.

"Packet Ship York for Liverpool

Passengers going out in the above ship are requested to be at Whitehall dock tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock precisely, where a steam-boat will be in readiness to convey them on board.

"The Letter-Bag will be taken from the Merchants Exchange $\frac{1}{4}$ before 10 o'clock."

Some of these reminders refer to the *York* as a Line Ship and go so far as to give the name of the steamer which was to ferry the passengers aboard. Under date of Jan. 6, 1827, appeared the following:

"Line Ship York for Liverpool — Passengers going out in the Line Ship *York*, Capt. Nash DeCost, for Liverpool, are requested to be at Whitehall Dock on Monday at 10 o'clock precisely, when the Steam Boat *Nautilus* will be in readiness to take them on board. The letter bag will be taken from the C. House at $\frac{1}{4}$ before 10."

When the steamboat finally came alongside the *York*, the Mate, J. Andrews, who wrote up much of the log, was at the gangway to welcome his superior officer and the passengers aboard ship and note

the exact time of their arrival. It does not, however, appear to have been the function of the log to record in most cases either the number of the passengers or their names, and, were it not for the obliging newspapers and the Custom House records, we should be uninformed on this interesting subject today. Happily "*The New York American*," for one, makes up for the defect. The issue for Saturday, December 9, 1826, for example, in its Marine List reports among arrivals the following:

"Ship *York*, DeCost, from Liverpool (Nov. 2) with dry goods & to Fish Grinnell & Co., P. Goelet, J. Congdon & Sons, T. Kent, R. White, Jr., J. J. Cox Hicks Lawrence & Co., Saltus, Son & Co., N. Hastings . . . J. Roosevelt & Sons . . .
Passengers,

Mrs. W. H. Anderson	I. R. Eckart
Miss Snell	L. F. Pocket
Miss C. Boyle	T. B. M'Minn
John Randolph Esq.	J. Ingham
G. Ogden	W. Hebblewhite
A. Landear	T. F. Forrest
C. W. Stokes	R. Baxter
T. Stokes	W. Johnston
R. P. George	C. McClan Jones"

Again on August 17, 1827, the same paper reports her arrival:
"Packet Ship *York*, DeCost, from Liverpool, (sailed 25th

June) with dry goods, hardware & . . .

"Passengers J. H. Buckingham of Boston
Edward Wrigley of England
Richard Roberts of England
David Ridgley Esquire of Baltimore
H. D. G. Carroll, Esquire of Baltimore
Benjamin Hempstead of N. York"

On one occasion, namely June 7, 1825, the log of the *York* breaks precedent and mentions the number of passengers on the eve of sailing from London for New York under Captain William Baker.

"Took some more passengers making 21 cabin and 22 in the steerage."

From this comment and evidence appearing in the newspapers it seems that the *York* carried anywhere from five or six to twenty-

two cabin passengers, and up to as many as forty-one in the steerage on the westward runs.

The steerage was of course made up largely of emigrants severing old ties for a new world across the ocean. They could expect no comfort or luxury aboard ship, especially when they came forty strong, but they were people of courage and enterprise unaccustomed to the refinements of life, and for the most part they seem to have survived the discomforts and perils of the voyage.¹⁴

In the cabin were to be found all sorts; retiring ambassadors, naval officers bearing dispatches, Canadian army officers, writers, actors, scholars, globe trotters, cotton speculators, ship owners, agents, New York and Liverpool merchants and their wives and families. They came from all corners of the earth and went to all corners of the earth and trod the decks of the *York* in passage.

Over this shifting group Captain DeCost presided at his table aboard ship and came to know many of them quite well, especially those who made a number of voyages with him. John Randolph was one of these, and, like many another, became a lasting friend of the Captain. Several of his letters to Captain DeCost are in existence today.

"To

Capt. Nash DeCost
(Late of the Packet Ship *Cortes*)
"Packet Ship *York*
New York

"Care of Messrs
Fish & Grinnell
Owners of the Ship

"Sunday 9th April 1826
All's Well!

"Dear Capt. DeCost

I've been looking for the enclosed three or four days in order to send it to you when lo! I recd it today from a near relation of mine to whom I had sent it by mistake instead of a letter of one of his neices.

"Genl Williams, from whom I have not heard since we parted company in the war Session of Congress 1812-13, wrote to me asking a letter of introduction for his son who was about to visit Europe and who as I understood him would embark

from Charleston. Whereupon I sent him a letter to Mr. Geo Marx 41 Lime Street City of the House of Gowan & Marx. That is their Compting House — his town residence is 19 Bedford Place Russell Square.

"You perceive that I did not forget my *new* Bedford friend either; or the old Cortez: now the *new* York.

"Return the letter at your perfect leisure My respects to your owners — your steady friend

J. R. of Roanoke

"To

Capt. Nash DeCost
Packet Ship York
Fish Grinnell & Co.
New York

"Washington Apl. 16. 1828.

"My dear Captain DeCoste

"I take the liberty to send you my watch by Mr. Van Rensselaer, and with it a ten dollar note, I wish to get the favor of you to put her in Roskell's hands, (the maker) with a request that he would clean regulate and do everything to her that is necessary, and send her back by you in the good Ship York. I hope that by this time you have received your hams, and that they may prove good, I would assist at the cutting of one of them on board the York, but this parental government of ours has stript me and left me as poor as a rat.

Your fast friend

J. R. of Roanoke

"I write, as you perceive by the hand of another. Tell Roskell to put the watch in a box, and seal it up.

Enclosed \$10. note — U. S. Bank. Letter O. No. 3032."

In spite of "this parental government" John Randolph soon found ways and means to put to sea, and the middle of June found him arrived at Liverpool. In Hugh A. Garland's "Life of John Randolph of Roanoke" the following appears on page 269, volume 11:

"'I have barely time to tell you' says he to a friend, 'that I had a very disagreeable passage, finding B—n, the Master of the *Alexander*, to be the most conceited and insufferable tyrant of the quarter-deck that I ever saw, and I have been to sea going on these three and forty years'."

A month later, on Sunday, July 16, 1826, John Randolph writes his friend, Dr. Brockenbrough:

"God willing, I shall return to the United States with DeCost, who leaves Liverpool on the 24th of October, in the *York*."

That he did, in fact, realize his hopes is shown by the list of the *York's* passengers, as printed in the *New York American* on December 9 of that year.

Captain DeCost also numbered among his friends James Monroe whom he may have met aboard the *York*, or possibly on shore through his friendship with John Randolph. In any case the good Captain brought back from England on one of his voyages a pitcher bearing Monroe's initials and his own. Unfortunately, however, Monroe died before the pitcher could be presented.

Outstanding among the many voyages of the *York* must have been those which saw among her passengers members of Captain DeCost's own family, and what preparations must have been made for their reception. In the first week of September 1829 we suspect that the *Ladies' Cabin* received a thorough going over, for Betsey DeCost and one of her daughters were to sail to Liverpool in the *York*. We suspect that the mahogany panels received an extra polish, that the cabin reserved for them was freshly painted and hung with new curtains, and more than likely that the pianoforte was carefully tuned. By the same token, we can picture the Captain making a last minute inspection to make sure that all was as it should be. If the steward ever had a chance to please the Captain that was it, and realizing it, he without question left no stone unturned. All of the cabin passengers must have benefitted from the extra fine table and the Captain's generous mood, and the reputation of the *York* doubtless soared.

For Betsey and her daughter it must have been gratifying to see Captain DeCost in his element, in command of his favorite ship, giving orders to his officers and men, and presiding as host at the head of the mahogany table in the dining saloon. Perhaps Miss DeCost entertained the company at the pianoforte, while Betsey sat on the crimson moreen covered sofa, and perhaps both had a glimpse of themselves in the "splendid pier glass."

Whatever the comforts of a trans-Atlantic voyage in a four hundred ton sailing vessel may have been, they were unhesitatingly of-

ferred to the cabin passengers of the *York* at the going rate of thirty guineas for the eastward passage and thirty-five for the westward. If one had any doubts in the matter he had only to refer to the advertisements to be reassured. As might be expected, Fish, Grinnell & Co. spoke well of its packets, and that monthly in printers ink. The standard advertisement for the Grinnell ships ended with this comment.

"These ships will be about 400 tons each, built of the best materials, copper fastened and coppered; commanded by men experienced in this trade; and no expense will be spared in making their accommodations convenient and comfortable for passengers. Beds, bedding, wines, and stores of the first quality are furnished . . ."

Besides the luxuries and comforts thus guaranteed there were occasional extra treats such as Mr. Randolph's Virginia hams, if the passengers had any stomach for food. So, however skeptical a person may be over the other comforts of the ship *York*, he must at least give full credit to the Captain's table, and this view of the packets in general is born out by contemporary writers and travellers.

First and last a goodly number of travellers crossed the Atlantic in the *York*, and it would be illuminating to compare their comment with the assurances held out by the Fish & Grinnell advertisements. Almost certainly numerous journals were kept by the *York's* passengers, but unhappily not many appear to have found their way into print. That of John Fowler, who sailed from Liverpool to New York in June 1830, was the exception. By great good fortune he devotes about twenty pages of his diary to the voyage, and gives a landlubber's view of his surroundings.

"June 24th, 1830 — about twelve o'clock this day I put myself on board the packet-ship *York*, Captain Thompson, bound from Liverpool to New York, with seven cabin and seven steerage passengers.

"25th — Little worthy of remark. Those never afloat before, sick in their berths, and those who have, being yet without their sea legs, staggering about the deck in a way that must be tolerated here, but would not be thought creditable on land; the vessel herself scarcely in proper trim, and all things bespeaking a recent departure from port, not omitting the intolerable *bilge water*, which drives me out of the cabin altogether . . .

"28th — Crept into my berth about eleven o'clock. Let not the landsman suppose this getting into a comfortable bed for

a night of undisturbed repose; 'tis quite another thing I assure him: but let him fancy a small room (though called a *State Room*) some three feet by six, and six feet high, in which are placed, one above the other, two tolerable-sized kneeding troughs, and he will then have as good an idea as is necessary of a dormitory at sea. This said berth is not boarded at the bottom, (would it were,) but made in the ordinary way with sacking, only braced down the middle instead of the sides, leaving, when at all relaxed, a most comfortless hollow in that part, into which, of course, you roll immediately you enter, and except when the lurching of the ship throws you for a moment upon the side, must there remain until you turn out altogether; probably, if you happen to occupy the lower berth, with the overworkings of some uneasy stomach inconveniencing you from above. At any rate there is the incessant dashing of waves close to your head, — the noise of the helm, trampling on the deck, and many *et ceteras* to break in upon sound slumber. When you rise, if shaving be the first operation, and the motion of the vessel considerable, it may probably be about half an hour before you can accomplish it, chiefly holding on with one hand whilst using the razor with the other, and you may consider yourself pretty fortunate if the floor of your apartment be not swimming with the contents of sundries capsized in the interim.

"July 2nd — The storm rages furiously and rolls us about, as if, at times, it were ready to roll us over . . . and the satisfaction of being on a good seaworthy vessel is sensibly felt by all.

"3rd. — Took breakfast at the cabin table, for the first time since coming on board, the smell (stench) of *bilge water*, now beginning to subside, having hitherto induced me greatly to prefer the deck. Fare excellent. Tea, coffee, boiled ham and eggs, anchovies, pickled shad, cold tongue and other meat, bread, of the finest American flour, baked fresh every day, biscuits, &c. &c. The hours for meals are: Breakfast, at eight; lunch, at twelve; dinner, at three; tea, coffee, or supper, just to your choice, at eight . . . Our wines and spirits are first rate, champaign especially; ale and London porter equally good, and all supplied unsparingly.

"16th — Took a bath this morning, (a luxury I have much missed since coming on board,) by getting over the bows of the vessel, and stationing one of the men aloft, whilst another supplied him with water, *fresh from the ocean*, to shower upon me; no finer *sea bathing* could be desired, though I seem to be the only one manifesting the least partiality for it."

CHAPTER VI

Liverpool Bound

Certain parts of the typical packet voyage the passengers may have found distasteful, but the novelty of making sail and running down the relatively quiet waters of New York harbour must have appealed to most. Tide and wind serving, the *York* lost little time in getting under weigh. Perhaps a rousing shanty rang through the ship, as the hands at the capstan brought the anchor up, and certainly the crew laid out on the yards to loose the sails in answer to the orders coming through the speaking trumpet on the quarter deck. All this took but a few minutes, and she was under weigh with anchor catted and sails filling.

Then it was farewell to New York, with the puffing sidewheel steamer far astern. Picture the packet standing down the Narrows, white canvas aloft, cluttered decks below, and her bubbling wake unrolling under her stern. Many times she sailed in company with other ships, and a crowded seaway it was if the wind failed, which happened on occasion. Open the weather stained pages of her log and read her experience of January 7, 1827:

"At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3 P.M. the wind died away and we drifted down across the Ship *Napoleon* and carried away our top mast back-stay and split the foresail."

And this was under the management of the harbour pilot. The log does not record what Captain DeCost said of that gentlemen's skill, nor yet what he thought of him. But pilots were not infallible; it will be remembered that one of them, during the War of 1812, stranded the American frigate *President* on a sand bar in New York harbour, with the result that she fell into the hands of the enemy. The *York*, however, was both fortunate and well managed, so that accidents of this sort were few and far between.

On her way down to the Hook she often met and spoke vessels inward bound from all parts of the world; witness the log September 8, 1827:

"Spoke the Ship *Catherine* inside of Sandy Hook 32 days from Havre. Desired to be reported."

If the Gods were kind this preliminary phase of the voyage usually took about two hours from the moment of weighing anchor. But it passed quickly enough; the trial of stomachs was to begin, and with the packet rising to the ground swell it was time for the passengers to see the pilot over the side carrying last minute messages and hurriedly scribbled letters for those left behind. And then, with the pilot gone and Sandy Hook Light astern, civil time came to an end, the sea log began, and the *York* took her departure. Studding sails and royals were set, and, if conditions were proper, up went the skysail yard and skysail. She carried sail, to use the old expression, and with a favouring westerly breeze she could log 200 miles in a day's run.

Forward on the forecastle hands shipped the anchors, stowed the cables, swabbed the decks and put things to rights generally, while aft on the quarter deck, like as not, Captain DeCost trained his fine brass telescope on Sandy Hook Light for a last look!

Summer voyages were frequently uneventful for the *York*, especially those to the eastward which followed the advantageous current of the Gulf Stream. Running before the prevailing westerly winds the ship could carry all her light canvas a great part of the time, and sail was constantly shifted day and night to meet changing conditions. If she had to shorten sail for a squall, the minute it had passed over up went the royals again, and out came the reefs, no matter what the hour of the watch. To cut a few hours from the passage time and establish a record run was the aim of every packet captain on each voyage, so they coaxed and drove their ships in turn to squeeze out of them the utmost in the way of speed.

In 1826 there were at least sixteen of these American packets sailing on schedule between New York and Liverpool, and competition of the stiffest sort was the rule. For the *York* there was almost always a Black Ball ship in the offing, and sometimes they sailed on the same tide. The November voyage in 1826 serves as an example.

"Ship York Nash DeCost Mast. Liverpool towards New York

"Nov. 2, 1826 . . . In company with the ship Manchester . . . At 4 P.M. Discharged the Pilotte at Point Linas Lt. . . . bears per compass W. N. West Dist. 5 Leagues.

"Nov. 29 . . . Passed the ship Manchester with her larboard tacks aboard . . ."

In this race the *York* was the victor. She took a pilot off Sandy Hook on December 6 at 3 P.M., roughly thirty-four days from Liverpool, and her arrival was reported "Since our last" in the *New York American* December 9, 1826, while the same paper reported the arrival of the Black Ball ship *Manchester* in its issue of December 12.

Races of this sort added flavor to the voyage for all concerned. Both passengers and owners placed bets on these runs and at times there was a purse for the successful captain and a bonus for the winning crew. No wonder the Yankees drove their ships to the despair of the British!

Here are more of the *York's* competitors turning up:

"Ship York Nash DeCost Master from Liverpool towards New York

"Friday March 3, 1826 — Got under way from Princess Dock. The Columbia in company.

"April 3, 1826 — 4 P.M. saw a ship standing to Westward with a cross in her fore topsail."

"Ship York Nash DeCost from Liverpool Towards New York

"July 27, 1826 — Latter part ends thick Breesy weather. At 8 A.M. set all Studing sails fore & aft. A ship in sight astern standing West with a Black Ball in her fore Topsail."

John Randolph, who comments on a wide variety of subjects, included the packets in his observations, as appears from his letter from London, May 27, 1822. Again we are indebted to Mr. Garland who reproduces the letter on page 176 volume 11 of his *Life of John Randolph of Roanoke*:

"It was a short one (the voyage), although part of it was somewhat boisterous, and the press of sail carried by our ships (the packets more especially), when those of other nations are under reefed and double reefed topsails, exposes them to greater dangers, while it shortens their voyage; and yet, such is the skill of our seamen, that insurance is no higher upon our bottoms than upon European ones."

But to return to the passage to Liverpool, if Captain DeCost were lucky he would be taking his pilot off the Tuskar Light in eighteen and a half days, and always hoped for better. But if light airs and baffling winds followed him across the Atlantic, with a sprinkling of calm stretches, he might take twenty-two or even thirty-four days.

A glance at a summary of some of the *York's* eastward passages will give a picture of her performance.

Ship York, Capt. Baker

March 21 1825 Discharged pilot off Sandy Hook
 April 25 1825 Got snug into London Dock

Ship York, Capt. Nash DeCost

Jan. 10 1826 Departure from Sandy Hook
 Jan. 29 1826 Hauled into Princess Dock Liverpool
 May 9 1826 Departure from Sandy Hook
 June 3 1826 Docked at Liverpool
 Sept 8 1826 At 2 P. M. discharged pilot Sandy Hook
 Oct 2 1826 Hove to for Pilot
 Jan 10 1827 Discharged pilot $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10 A.M. Sandy Hook
 Jan 30 1827 11 A.M. Liverpool pilot came aboard (Tuskar Light)
 May 9 1827 At 1 P.M. Pilot left us (Sandy Hook)
 May 27 1827 At 8 A.M. Pilot came aboard
 Sept 8 1827 Departure Sandy Hook
 Oct 1 1827 10 A.M. took pilot off the Skerrys
 Jan 9 1828 $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3 A.M. pilot left us at Sandy Hook
 Jan 31 1828 2 P.M. took Pilot off Pt Linas
 May 9 1828 2 P.M. pilot left us off Sandy Hook
 June 13 1828 Hauled into Princess Dock

These runs of the *York* were probably typical of the period although the *New York*, George Maxwell, in December 1823 turned in a record passage of fifteen days and sixteen hours from New York to Liverpool. A passage of this sort was, however, exceptional, and we find the *Dreadnaught* under Captain S. Samuels in 1823 and 1854 taking from eighteen to thirty days. Under favorable conditions the *Dreadnaught*, which was a much larger and faster ship than the early packets, could of course out-sail them. Frequently she made the voyage in less than eighteen days and on several occasions bettered fourteen days.

Although Captain DeCost drove his ship hard, true to the packet tradition, he seems to have found time for other things as well, and when a national holiday, such as the Fourth of July, fell within a voy-

age, he made a point of celebrating by firing several guns aboard his ship. This practice may have been solely for the benefit of the passengers, and again it may have been unadulterated patriotism on the part of the Captain. Whatever the motive, the fact remains that a salute was fired on July 4, 1827 and duly recorded in the log:

"N.B. At meridian fired two guns in commemoration of the Day."

Captain Baker, who commanded the *York* before Captain DeCost, was more prodigal of his powder, since on one occasion at least, with R. Rush, retiring ambassador to the Court of St. James, aboard, he saluted the 4th of July by firing a gun for every ship in the line and one for each State in the Union.

Of course half of the fun in reading a log comes from piecing out the whole by reading between the prosaic lines, and here we can conjure up an entertaining picture of the passengers gathered on deck, the brave spirits in the fore and the timid in the rear, including the ladies with fingers held against their ears, all waiting the frightful moment. Then, again, with the smoke cleared away we can picture them in the cabin drinking appropriate toasts to the Day, to the *York*, and to Captain DeCost, who doubtless ordered the crew to "splice the main brace" as well. John Fowler luckily bears us out in part by writing in his journal on July 4: "Liberated the cork of an extra bottle of champaign upon the occasion."

But to return to the gun; it had other uses, especially as a signal. In thick weather, for example, it was not always easy to find the pilot boat off the harbour, but the firing of a gun could be counted on to bring her out to the incoming ship. The entry for March 30, 1828, corroborates this statement:

"Midnight thick foggy weather — hauled off & stood to the South under easy sail. The Highlands in sight. Wore ship occasionally & fired several guns."

Trans-Atlantic crossings in those days must have been a trial for many of the passengers, so that the sighting of a sail was an event and a welcome change from the ordinary daily routine of ship life. Underwriters and owners also were keenly interested in reports of vessels sighted or spoken, with the result that the log of the *York* faithfully records all such meetings on the high seas.

"Ship York Nash DeCost New York towards Liverpool

"Sept. 11, 1826 — At 8 spoke the Sch—— from Antigua bound to Liverpool Nova Scotia. She lost one man — main boom & received other damage from the boarding of a sea.

"Sept. 21, 1826 — Commences with violent gales from the Westward. At 4 P.M. took in the M sail and misen top sail. At 5 P.M. passed the Ship Tamerlaine of Westcaset laying too under close reefed main top sail & reefed fore sail."

Of equal interest was the sighting of any wreckage or other evidence of disaster, so on one crossing, at the expense of the run, we find the *York* hove to in mid-ocean to pick up a floating bale.

"May 18, 1828 — Picked up a Square bale of cotton marked ICL No 19."

Nothing more was discovered, however, and the *York* resumed her course eastward.

A real derelict was sighted during the April voyage of 1829 and reported with the *York's* arrival by the *New York Evening Post* on April 16.

"28th Lat 42 — 4 Lon. 52 - 30 — Passed a wreck supposed to be a brig, masts gone, and decks out, bowsprit standing, part of gib hanging to gib boom, green bottom, with white streak around her waist, Portland on her stern and *Dromo* on her head board."

Usually on the run to Liverpool the first land sighted and recorded in the log, was Cape Clear, the Tuskar Light, or the Skerries. Here the *York* picked up her pilot for the Mersey, concluded her sea log, and a few hours later hauled safe and sound alongside Prince's Dock.

In those days, before modern refrigeration was known, the *York*, like other ships, carried part of her stores in the form of live stock; and a very good barn yard representation it was. Thanks to John Fowler, we have the roll for one voyage at least. He writes:

"We have a cow on board, which furnishes an abundant supply of milk; four of five fine sheep; half a dozen small pigs; some geese, and ducks and fowls unnumbered."

So, as soon as the ship tied up, pigs, cows, and poultry were sent ashore to be out of the way, and incidentally to recoup from days of cramped quarters aboard ship.

If the passengers and animals were glad to get back on dry land, the sailors were no less so, and invariably part of them jumped ship at the first opportunity. On October 13, 1826, as soon as the *York* docked, "Joseph Smith & William Hurrell absconded from the ship," soon to be followed by others, for on the 24th in Liverpool, "Eight men shipped in place of the runaways."

While Captain DeCost was ashore making preparations for the return voyage, executing commissions for friends at home, and picking up presents for his family, Jeremiah Andrews, the first mate, was sending the sails to the loft for inevitable repairs and busying himself about the cargo. Cotton and hides were hoisted out of the hold to make way for the west bound freight, which, as a rule, took the form of coals, hardware, iron and steel. The following entries show how the time schedule went:

"Ship York Laying in Princess Dock Liverpool

"May 31 1827—At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8 commenced discharging cotton.

"June 2—Commenced discharging hides.

"June 6—took in 1070 bars & 40 bundles of iron.

"June 8—took in 137 bars & 40 bundles of iron.

"June 12—took in 3 boxes of steel.

"June 13—took in 6 casks of hardware & 2 casks.

"June 20—took in fifty tons of coal."

CHAPTER VII

Westward, Ho!

The westward passage usually began with towing down the Mersey. On June 25, 1827, the *York* began her return voyage to New York with the following log entry:

"Took a Pilot aboard & the steamboat took us in tow & proceeded down to the floating light."

But if the wind blew from the south, sailing ships were sometimes able to do without the expensive aid of the steamboat as the log entry of another of the *York's* voyages from Liverpool to New York reveals:

"Feb. 26, 1828—6 a.m. hauled to the Pier head. Pilot, Capt. & passengers came aboard — Made sail & proceeded to sea with a brisk breeze from the South." 10 a.m. discharged the pilot."

On this same voyage, by the way, there was one person who sailed without Captain DeCost's knowledge and without the knowledge of the Port authorities. Who he was or what his reason for stowing away on the *York* will probably never be known. He may have been a fugitive from the constabulary or merely a deserter from another ship, but, whoever he may have been, he was finally discovered. The log records:

"Feb. 28, 1828—N. B. Found one man concealed in the long boat — Put him to work."

In all probability Captain DeCost questioned the man when he was hauled out of his hiding place and brought aft, but the log does not enlarge on the matter. Thus it goes, part of the crew jumps ship when she makes port, and another man stows away aboard the same ship to get away from the port, proving that altogether, it is a queer world. But a stowaway could not expect a free passage; he must either work out his passage or pay the passage money, and apparently he took the former alternative.

For one reason or another the business of stowing away on ships out of Liverpool seems to have been a thing of frequent occurrence.

On the June voyage of the *York* celebrated by Mr. Fowler we find an Irish ship carpenter hidden away with a bottle of whiskey. On the second day out he was unearthed and stood revealed in a somewhat hungry state, if not one of thirst. "Had he not been discovered," the log reported, "he says it was his intention to have kept below until he thought we were about half seas over, when we surely could not have refused to carry him through."

Captain E. R. Thompson promised to put the miscreant aboard the first Liverpool bound ship spoken, but fortunately for the Irishman this course proved inconvenient, and the *York* apparently carried him safe and sound to his desired port.

Westward, ho! for the packets meant a run of variable length. Under the most favorable conditions Captain DeCost could count on raising Sandy Hook in thirty-one days, while under opposite conditions it might very well take as much as forty-eight days. It was impossible, therefore, to adhere to anything resembling an exact schedule in this direction. Head winds and head seas were largely responsible for the greater time necessary for westward crossing; if it took twenty-one days to sail to Liverpool, it would take at least thirty-one days to sail back again and probably more. So the *York* and Captain DeCost simply had to do the best they could. A number of the voyages towards New York are summarized as follows:

Mar 3 1826—Got under weigh from Princess Dock
Apr 3 1826—Anchored inside Sandy Hook
June 25 1826—Left Liverpool
Aug 3 1826—Arrived New York
Nov 2 1826—At 4 P.M. discharged the Pilot (Liverpool)
Dec 6 1826—At 3 P.M. took Pilot off Sandy Hook
June 26 1827—At 3 P.M. Pilot left us (Liverpool)
Aug 12 1827—Took a pilot off Sandy Hook
Oct 25 1827—At 5 Pilot left us (Liverpool)
Dec 1 1827—Took Pilot 4 P.M. off Sandy Hook

Again, these crossing were probably about average for the period. As the sailing qualities of the packets improved, however, the time was cut down. The *Yorkshire*, an unusually fast ship, for example, is reported to have arrived at New York from Liverpool under Captain D. G. Bailey in less than sixteen days; that was in November, 1846. By the same token our old friend the *Dreadnaught* in 1854 was taking

from nineteen to twenty-nine days to make her home port from Liverpool.

Summer voyages to the westward were the slowest of all, for at this time of year the head winds were apt to alternate with calms. However mild the weather, and however light the breeze, it would be inaccurate to suggest that the summer voyages were without hazard. Then, as now, ice at times had a way of working south from Newfoundland and the Straits of Belle Isle into the shipping lanes. Moreover, in those days there was no ice patrol, and the wise skipper kept a sharp lookout for bergs and took the temperature of the water from time to time. Thus, on July 24, 1826, we find the *York*, from Liverpool to New York, feeling her way through a group of dangerous icebergs.

"Remarks on Board Monday July 24th 1826 — Begins pleasant weather — all sail set — at 2 P.M. set F. T. — T Gallant sail . . . fine fresh breezes. At 3-30 P.M. saw a — isle of ice to the Southward or Berg Ice. Sight to Leeward. At 8.30 P.M. in top gallant Sails. Single reefed the top sails. Shortened sail on a count of fog & ice. Middle part foggy. Latter part the same as above mentioned. At 10 out all reefs. Set T g S & Royals. No Obs. this Day"

Wind, calm, or ice there was always something doing aboard the *York*. A lull was just one more opportunity for nautical observation which might be turned to future account, and Captain DeCost was quick to take advantage of it. Data on ocean currents that might speed or retard the packet voyages were of particular importance, and to this field of research the log of the *York* makes its contribution.

"July 21, 1826 — Latter part ends calm. At 9 P.M. got out the Boat & tried the current — four mile current."

Protracted calms try the nerves of everyone on shipboard, but some spots are better than others for slatting about on a glassy sea. On the Grand Banks, for example, if the wind petered out, both passengers and the watch below could relieve the tedium by throwing over a cod line with reasonable assurance of success, while the catch would serve as a welcome change of diet. The *York's* log entry for November 11, 1827, reveals:

"Latter part light airs & calm. Caught several cod fish. 17 Days out. Latt^d 44 - 54."

Summer passages usually had one marked advantage for the passengers; they could spend much of their time on deck if they chose. Not so the fall and winter crossings, and especially the long stormy voyages to New York which often kept the thirty-five guinea people below for days on end. The crew went aloft in snow and sleet, reefing, sending down the yards, and repairing damage as it occurred. Samples of hardship crop up all through the fall and winter log. For example:

"Remarks on Board Nov 28th 1827 — 4 P.M. a sudden flaw struck & carried away the jib boom, close to the cap. Midnight more moderate out reefs. Latter part moderate breezes & fine pleasant weather. Passengers all on deck for the first time this 11 days. 34 Days out. Latt^d Obs^d 39° 16'."

During the March voyage in 1826 the *York* seems to have encountered almost more than her share of heavy weather. This section of the log tells the story graphically and well, as follows:

"The Ship York (Nash DeCost) From Liverpool towards New York

Saturday March 4 1826 Spoke the Brig Edward 31 days from Mobiel	Commences light breezes & calms the Columbia in company At 6 P.M. Great Ormes Head bore per compass WSW dist about 18 miles Employed the day securing for sea At 8 saw the Skerreys Light bearing WSW dist 18 miles At 9 saw Holey Head Light At 10 the Skerrys bore SbW at 3.30 A.M. tk to the — & Eastward at 8.30 A.M. tk to the N & Westward Holy Head bearing per compass — Sw dist 10 miles Ends with fresh breezes from WSW John Jonson sick & off duty
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Monday March the 6 1826

Fresh Breezes from the S & Westward At 8 P.M. saw Wicklow Light bearing NW & Bardsey Isle — SE Midnight tk to the N & Westward At 1 A.M. saw Bardsey Island Light bearing ESE dist about 25 miles At 2 A.M. tk to the S 4 A.M. tk to the NW At 5.20 A.M. saw the Welch coast At 7 A.M. double reef^d the top sails — heavy gale Close reef^d top sails took in jib main-sail spanker & misen top sail Wore ship to the S & Eastward Ends with strong gales & high sea

Split the fore top mast stay sail Ship labouring heavy Ship in mutch water on deck

Remarks on Board Saturday (March) 25, 1826

Commences brisk breese from the Northward all drawing sail set to advantage

4 A.M. increseing gails took (in) top gain sails single reef^d the top sails

Midle Part fresh gales with squals of hail & snow

Latter Part more moderate

Sett top gain sails & for top mast (stearng-) sails

Three men sick Latt Obs 41 - 31 N

Remarks on Board Friday March 31 1826

NNE NW

Commences strong gales from NW 3 P.M. double reef^d top sails (8 P.M.) TK^d to the Westward

Midnight strong gales split the main top sail Reef him & reef^d main sail 8 P.M. all hands employed bending a new top sail sent down the old one & commenced repairing him

Ends with strong breezes from NW

Latt Obs 40 - 07 N."

No matter how skilfully a ship is sailed heavy weather sooner or later takes toll, and damage of one sort or another results. Captain Baker and Captain DeCost both testify on this score.

"Ship York, Wm. Baker Ma" from New York towards London.

"Remarks Tuesday March 22nd" 1825 — Brisk breezes from the N. E. Employed setting up Rigging — 1 P. M. single reef^d Tops'l In jib & Spanker, carried away martingail Chainbolt. 4 P.M. double reef^d sent down Royal Yds & fore & m'zn y—royal masts — 10 A.M. a heavy sea running, in double reefs furl^d main sail.

"Ship labouring hard, washed away after booby hatch, secured it with boards & one pump going every 2 hours, furl^d mizen tops'l."

"Ship York, Nash DeCost, from Liverpool towards N. York

Remarks on Board Nov' 14, 1827 — . . . 4 A.M. double reef^d the top sails & furled the main sail. 9 A.M. shipped a

heavy set which washed — the quarter boat & quarter board on the starboard side Gale increasing—in fore top sail, wind ESE blowing hard—Gales & violent squalls—the ship shipping much water. 20 days out.”

Something of the work entailed in handling a ship in such a storm may be gleaned from the following entry from the *York's* log, bound to Liverpool under Capt. DeCost:

“Remarks on Board Sept 30 1826

Commences with brisk breezes from the South^d 6 P.M. Strong gales. Double reefed the topsails, at, 8 brisk breezes from the South with some rain At midnight heavy squalls from the South carried away the Jibboom by the cap lost the G. and flying gib. close reefed the topsails reefed Foresail At 1 A.M. tremendous gales took in the F topsail, lay too under close reefed M. T reefed F sail & fore Top mast staysail.

At 2 A.M. the F topmast staysail was blown from the ropes

At 4 the wind hauled to the Westward At 6 more moderate Made sail & precede up channel.”

While the *York* was now and then ill-treated by winds and seas, Captain DeCost she lost only one man in his command or her — John Williams, an Englishman, who fell overboard November 12, 1828, and was drowned. Only one other death is reported, being that of a man who came aboard ill and died in the Liverpool infirmary after leaving the ship. Good management played an important part in producing such a record, likewise good fortune, as accidents are bound to occur. Captain Baker's second officer, for example, was spared by a miracle while the *York* was working up the Thames. His escape was an unusually fortunate one:

20th Sept. Tuesday 1825 — Commenced moderate breezes & fine weather At 9 A.M. got under way with the flood made all sail & worked up River at 8 P.M. came too. Carried away the maintopsail tye, the topsail Yard Knocked the Second Officer from the M topmast rigging in to the Beley of the M top sail. Ends light breezes & fine W—”

It is also interesting to note that Captain DeCost had no difficulties with his crews, even though, on May 16, 1826, he did have the forecastle overhauled for tobacco. They uncovered almost two pounds per man and apparently got at the root of the tobacco stains

on the holystoned deck. Quid or no quid, he commanded the respect and obedience of his sailors, and it was his boast that he was never obliged to flog a man under him. This was greatly to his credit and demonstrates that he was skilled in the art of handling men as well as in that of sailing ships. Flogging was a common form of discipline during this period and one recommended to masters of vessels. In Blunt's *American Coast Pilot* for 1817 the matter is dealt with in the appendix, under "Instructions for Masters of Vessels:

"The master has the power of appointing his officers and crew, and has the entire command over them, during the voyage for which they were shipped. He may, and it is his duty for the preservation of peace and order on board his vessel, to administer moderate chastisement, but this chastisement must not be a blow with the fist or stick; the seamen ought to be flogged with a rope before the crew, who at the same time may be apprised of the offence, and that is limited to disobedience of orders. In case of mutinous behavior, or such gross mal-conduct of any seaman as to endanger the safety of vessel and cargo, the master is justified in putting him in irons. Repeated disobedience or neglect is a sufficient cause for the master to discharge a seaman; but this disobedience and neglect should be obstinate, and continued, or often repeated, to justify such an exertion of authority in the master."

Without implying that Captain Baker overemphasized the rope's end, he evidently took Mr. Blunt's "Instructions for Masters of Vessels" more to heart than did Captain DeCost, or else he was less fortunate in his crews. In either case his last voyage aboard the *York* (from London towards New York), was marred by incidents which made it rather less peaceful than those that followed. Oddly enough the log, usually notable for brevity, devotes generous space to the account of these happenings.

"Remarks Nov 28th 1825 — W½ S North'ly, Light breezes & fine W— At 8 wind hauled to the East" Out all steering Sails. Middle part ditto W—

"Later part fresh breezes & cloudy W— 4 Jibbed Ship At 6 A.M. the Second Officer went forward to call the Carpenter as usual and the carpenter said he would not work for him, Captain & nobody else. The Capt — forward & ordered him up himself. But denied coming aft. The Capt then collared him & hauled him aft and order" the Second Mate to put him



Goblet presented Captain DeCost by passengers
reading: "*For Auld Lang Syne.*"

Rigging & flogg him. Called all hands aft to witness it. The Carpenter then finding the Capt. Resolute said he would go to work if the Capt. would let him which he did.

Remarks Decth 8th, 1825 — West WNW — 6 out all reefs— Set top gall' Sails. Several sail in sight.

"At Breakfast observed Coffin (seaman) & Reace (the Second Cook) fighting. I went forward to part them, which I did. The Coffin man said he would thrash the negro & any body that took his part and made a pass at me, I then collared him and told him to down the fore Castle he said he would not till he had satisfaction of the Negro. — Captn Baker by this time came forward and told him to go below he said he would be dam'd if he would, & began to abuse him in a very scurrilous & mutinous manner, I then brought him aft & ordered to put him in irons — & all the time making use of the most indecent & shocking language a man can make use of — & menaced very much, saying as he had no wages coming too him this is just what he wanted to get some money from the Marine Court on the Quarter Deck before several of the passengers. We then put him double irons & put down the aft hold. Previous to this he pushed the Captn down & made a pass at him & took him by the Privates & hurt him severely."

Once on soundings, to get back to the passage, with the home port only a few days ahead, the business of grooming the ship began. Weather permitting the watch went to work scrubbing and painting her sides and scraping down the bright work that the good ship *York* might present her best appearance on arriving in New York harbour. She must pass muster with her owners and, if possible, outshine all competitors.

Sandy Hook lighthouse, the Highlands of "Neversink," or the Long Island shore, more often than not proved the landfall. Passengers packed up their baggage, the crew bent chains on the anchors, the pilot came aboard and the sea log ended. Then the steamboat, then Pine Street Wharf, the Customs, and the voyage was done.

Speech was silver according to the old saying, but in the language of the packet passengers gratitude was silver, and, if the mementos presented to the Captain by the *York's* passengers are any criterion, the donors were thoroughly glad to get on shore! In his will Captain DeCost disposes of a number of such tokens, as follows:

"I give, devise and bequeath unto my daughter Abby Porter wife of William V. Porter aforesaid, the sum of One Hundred

in irons, — The Capt. then ordered him tric'd up in the Main Dollars, also the Silver vase presented to me on the 8th day of May, 1826 by the passengers of the Ship *York*.

"I give, devise and bequeath unto my daughter Sarah W. DeCost the Silver tea sett, presented to me by the passengers of the Ship *Cortes*.

"I give, devise and bequeath unto my wife Hannah H. DeCost . . . the silver pitcher presented to me in 1829 by the passengers of the Ship *York*.

Usually these gifts were inscribed with sentiments suitable to the occasion, sometimes in verse and sometimes in prose. One handsome goblet carries a verse on each side in these words.

N. D. C.

For Auld Lang Syne

Long may he live;
Happy may he be;
Blest with content,
And from misfortunes free.

Here's a health to Capⁿ DeCost;
That he may drink,
And never sink,
But plough the ocean through.

The silver pitcher, which Captain DeCost bequeaths to his wife, Hannah, bears a less jovial inscription. It suggests the hardships of a winter passage, and true appreciation of seamanship.

Presented

by the Passengers of the
York

to

Capt. Nash DeCost

As a testimony of their esteem
for his attention

in the January Voyage

1829

There is also in existence a fine brass telescope and wooden case given to the Captain when he commanded the *Euphrates*. The inscription gives the name of the donor without his history.

Presented to N. DeCost
by his Friend
Maxwell Trokes, 1816

However, the New York papers in 1818 list Mr. Trokes as a consignee of goods from Liverpool. As late as January 29, 1821, Maxwell Trokes appears in a passenger list of the *Euphrates*, so it may reasonably be assumed that he was a New York merchant and a frequent traveller between these two ports.

CHAPTER VIII

Later Years of the York

Although the ultimate fate of the *York* does not appear, something of her later history is known. She held on as a Liverpool packet until May 8, 1831, and as a London packet for another two years, after which she was obliged to bow to the newer ships. After this her name fails to appear in the Fish & Grinnell sailing notices. During her final year as a Liverpool packet she was commanded by Captain E. R. Thompson and Captain Ira Bursley in turn. After this Ezra Nye, who was soon to command the *Independence*, seems to have sailed the *York* on the London run until 1833.¹⁵

She was still a fine, sound ship, however, and her owners, looking about for other employment for her, put her to work in the China trade. Thus, in 1835, we find the *York*, under Captain Sterling, sailing back from Canton to her home port in 104 days. This was a good run, ranking with the better ones of the period, so it is evident that the *York* was still holding her head high, even though she had retired from the packet service.

Following her China voyages, the *York* went into the whaling industry, and she turns up as a whaler at Edgartown, Massachusetts, in 1841. From this port she made two successful voyages; one to the North West Coast in 1841 under Captain John H. Pease, and one to the Pacific in 1844 under Captain George Coffin, finally returning in 1847.

In spite of the stench of whale oil, which could not have been far worse than the bilge water so offensive to John Fowler in 1830, the gold rush of '49 pressed the *York* into passenger service again, this time to carry would-be miners to California. Robert G. Albion in his excellent "Square Riggers on Schedule," notes that she was sold in that year for \$8,500.

The following notice in the *Daily Advertiser*, Boston, February 14, 1849, announces her purchase by the Pacific Company, her new owners:

FOR CALIFORNIA

The Pacific Company having purchased the staunch and very fast ship YORK, built in New York, of live oak, propose to sail on the 20th February. The number of associates is limited to thirty persons, who contribute \$1000. each as joint stock, and the Ship will be fitted up for a home in California for 2 years. The list is nearly full, and may be seen, together with the By-Laws at the Company's office, #15 India St., opposite the Custom House.

The marine journal shows that the *York* finally sailed on April 1, 1849,¹⁶ under Captain George N. Cheever of Salem with 38 passengers in all.

That she made her voyage around the Horn successfully is shown by the account of Octavius T. Howe in his *Argonauts of '49*.

PACIFIC MINING COMPANY

Sailed from Boston, April 2, 1849, on ship *York*, George N. Cheever, master. Arrived at San Francisco, September 17, 1849, a passage of 170 days. The *York* made one voyage to Australia from San Francisco and on her return became a store ship in 1851. In 1882 the *York* was owned by Bolton, Barron and Co. of San Francisco and used to store Chili flour, being anchored near California Street wharf.

38 in company

Thus, the old Swallowtail Line packet, like so many other famous sailing ships, ended her days in service out of the great West Coast port of Frisco.

CHAPTER IX

Farewell To The Sea

With more than a little whaling and ninety-nine Atlantic crossings to his credit it is not strange that Captain Nash DeCost decided to retire. In the spring of 1830, after his forty-seventh birthday, he surrendered command of the *York*. Probably it was a wrench for him, but he had the satisfaction of looking back on a career of achievement which started from scratch and carried him step by step to the top of his profession. He had acquired sufficient means to support his family in complete comfort, and with this assurance turned his back to the sea which had dealt so generously with him.

The city might do well enough for the parents, but as a year round proposition it was not the most healthful arrangement for the children. Two DeCost children had died there; on March 17, 1824, John DeCost, barely six months old, and on October 1, 1826, another John DeCost, less than five months old. So the family doubtless felt that a change to country life would prove better for all of them.

Perhaps the Captain realized that the call of the sea might prove too strong to resist were he to settle on the coast, or perhaps he had picked out his place of retirement years before, but, whatever the reason, he made up his mind to try his hand at farming in the Onondaga country of Western New York, so highly spoken of in New Bedford at the beginning of the eighteen twenties. He packed up his family, goods and chattels, as far as we can tell in 1830, and left New York City for still another adventure.

In those days the *Chief Justice Marshall* and the *Albany* plied up and down the Hudson, making the run from the lower end of Manhattan Island to the head of navigation in the astonishing time of twelve hours, so it is natural to suppose that Captain DeCost took advantage of this convenient method of transportation to carry his menage to Albany. The next leg of the journey we know something of, thanks to Sarah DeCost, who says that they travelled by canal packet. As it happens, the canal packets actually left from Schenectady, because of the great number of locks between that city and

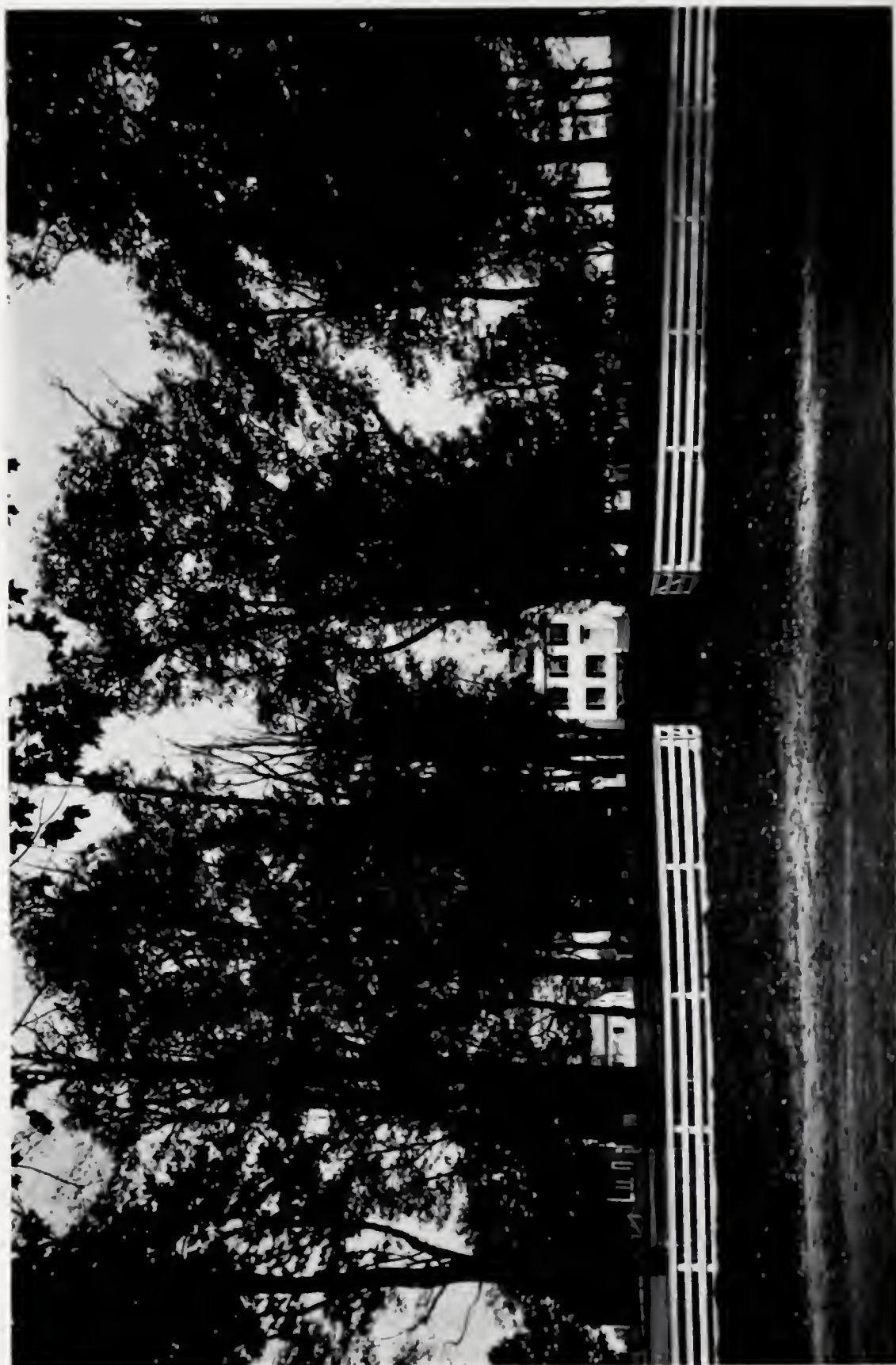
Albany. Canal packet passengers, therefore, covered this short distance by stage, choosing between the "Old" and "Pioneer" lines. Once arrived at Schenectady, all they had to do was to go aboard, either in the morning or the evening, as there were two sailings daily. After that it was up to the tow horses, who were advertised to bring the packets to Utica in twenty-four hours, and all the way to Buffalo in four days.

Without stretching the imagination very far we can picture Captain DeCost pacing the deck of this unfamiliar craft, with an eye on the wind and weather, a nautical quip for the master, yarns for the passengers, and solicitude for his family. His live stock, which included a cow named Chestina, and a bull, delicately referred to as a Brutus, (especially imported from England in the *York* against the farming venture), must have travelled in a separate canal boat, as the packets carried passengers only.¹⁶

Slow as the canal boat was, it was infinitely more comfortable than the dusty, lurching stage, and if the traveller had patience and time, it finally brought him to his destination. Syracuse, we suspect, may have been the point at which the DeCosts transferred from the canal packet to the stage which in due course carried them to their snug harbour in Skaneateles, where they cast anchor and brought their journey to an end.

On the farm on the east side of Skaneateles Lake, Captain DeCost installed his family, his household goods, and of course Chestina and Brutus, and began getting his roots down into the soil. Moreover, while he was far from salt water, he had the next best thing to it in the fine expanse of Skaneateles Lake stretching away to the southward, and when the mood was on him he could scan the white-caps with his old telescope and make mental notes on the seamanship of local freshwater sailors. At this time there were both sailing craft and at least one steamer on the Lake, and as early as September 1831 we find both Eliza and Pamela DeCost members of a steamboat party to the head of the Lake in the *Independence*, Captain Wells.

Farming was not all beer and skittles, and, mood or no mood, Captain DeCost had to keep a watchful eye on his plantation. There were always an endless number of matters to be attended to — stock to be fed, cows to be milked, fields to be ploughed and seeded, and crops to be gathered, all of which called for a full measure of any



The farm of Capt. Nash DeCost - East side of Skaneateles Lake, New York State

man's time. Also, there were occasional emergencies; the story goes that Nash DeCost had on his farm a fine yoke of oxen, and that one day they took it into their heads to bolt. Once under way, there was no stopping them till they finally crashed through the Village bridge and fetched up in the creek. Here was a semi-nautical problem for the Captain to solve, but unfortunately we do not know what the upshot of the matter was.

Between crops, over the cider press, or before the fire on long winter evenings there was time for yarn spinning on the busiest of farms, and Captain DeCost seems to have excelled in this department. His whaling adventures were a favorite theme with him, though no one, more's the pity, took the trouble to write them down. In fact, so eloquent was the old Captain that he inspired Edward B. Coe and his farm hand to set out for New Bedford, whence they shipped on a whaling voyage in the *Milo*. This voyage, as it happened, was the beginning of a career for the latter, Charles Goodall, who finally became a prominent ship owner and business man in San Francisco.

Retirement to the farm meant for the first time a united DeCost family. The Captain was no longer separated from his wife and children for weeks at a time, and for Betsey there was no longer the anxiety of those many stormy winter crossings, and the fear that the shipping news might confirm her most painful imaginings. These were years of well earned peace and relaxation in the most friendly of surroundings.

For Betsey DeCost, unhappily, these years of reward were all too few, for she died towards the end of 1837, barely seven years after settling on the farm. She was buried at Skaneateles where a simply inscribed stone marks her grave.

Sacred to the Memory of
Betsey
Wife of Capt. Nash DeCost
Who d. Nov. 13 1837
Aged 51 Years 6 months
And 17 days

The termination of this long partnership was a blow to the Captain who must have begun to find the farm a lonely place, and the more so as his children, now grown, were setting up their own homes.

Pamela married Samuel Brainerd of New York the following summer, and there was presumably evidence that both Eliza and Abby would soon follow her example. At the same time Franklin was making his own way with the firm of Minturn and Grinnell, which called for his presence in New York, and, it is said, New Orleans. Thus the Captain saw the number under his roof dwindling away, with the possibility that only his daughter Sarah and his sister-in-law, Pamela Wilbur, would be left. But he was not despondent, and, instead of allowing himself to turn into an old hulk on a lee shore, took a new lease on life and married Hannah H. Coe, the widow of Chauncey H. Coe of Skaneateles.

Marriage was in the air, as the saying goes, for the very next fall Eliza DeCost was married to Charles John Burnett, Jr., and in 1842 Abby became the wife of William V. Porter of New York.

So the wheel of life kept turning, and, one consideration with another, Nash DeCost decided to dispose of his farm, and bought another house rather nearer the village.

Captain DeCost seemed destined to survive not only his first wife, but other members of his family as well. In 1843 his sister-in-law, Pamela Wilbur, died, and in 1846 his eldest daughter, Eliza, both at Skaneateles. Financial matters took a bad turn too, for the Captain appears to have invested a considerable sum in a sawmill project, which proved to have little economic justification, and ended in dismal failure.

During these years Nash DeCost was an active member of his community and a strong churchman. We find him listed among the vestry of St. James Episcopal Church, where a window sacred to his memory may be seen today. People of the last generation remembered the old sea Captain with his cane, trudging along the village street with a cheerful word for everyone and a keen interest in all that was going on. So by degrees he became one of the old inhabitants, and as much a part of the village scene as the steeple itself.

Towards the end of his life he became partially paralyzed, and his infirmity confined him for the most part to his room. But even then he had moments of determination and energy. When the Town Fair was held nothing would do but that he go to see it, and go he did, with the aid of his friends, who seated him in a chair on a

"stone-boat" and had him drawn on this novel conveyance to the fair grounds.

On January 27, 1858, Captain Nash DeCost departed this life at Skaneateles, New York, in his seventy-fifth year, and was buried, according to the *Skaneateles Democrat*, "in citizens dress". The newspaper reported:

The newspaper reported: "The funeral service took place from the Episcopal Church on Sunday where a large concourse of friends were gathered to pay their last tribute of respect to an old friend and neighbor."

Obituaries appeared in various newspapers including those of New Bedford and New York, however, that of the *Skaneateles Democrat* is the most complete. It read:

"The Late Capt. Nash DeCost.

"It is but justly due to the deceased to pay a passing tribute to his memory, for the many sterling and manly traits of character which he so eminently possessed. He was for many years honorably engaged as Captain in Messrs. Fish & Grinnell's line of packets, sailing between New York and Liverpool.

"His nautical skill as a commander, his untiring perseverance in his ardent profession, and his unbending integrity of purpose won for him many warm and lasting friends in the first commercial circles in England as well as in his native country.

"Having gained a handsome competency, he retired from commercial pursuits, and removed from New York to Skaneateles where he devoted himself to agriculture for many years with that energy which was so prominent in his character.

"Winning here, as elsewhere, the esteem and confidence of a wide circle of acquaintances by his uprightness of conduct, and native goodness of heart, which will long endear him to the memory of his family and surviving friends."

The *New York Journal of Commerce*, on February 2, 1858, printed the following:

"Captain Nash DeCost, who died in Skaneateles on the 27th of January, 1858, at the advanced age of seventy-five years, was well known in this city thirty years ago as one of the most popular shipmasters in the *Swallow Tail Line* of Liverpool packets. Those who had occasion to cross the Atlantic at that

period will remember him as commander of the favorite packet ship *York*. Previous to his connection with that ship, he severally commanded the ships *Euphrates*, *Cortes*, and *Averick*, in all of which he not only gave satisfaction to the owners, but also to those who had occasion to take passage with him. The numerous gifts of silver plate which he possessed and cherished in his advanced years testified to his popularity with his passengers.

"He was always a good friend of the sailor, and has often boasted that he never had occasion to flog a man who sailed with him in the whole course of his life. He possessed a good heart, and it was always in the right place when appealed to by those in distress.

"He was born in Fair Haven, near New Bedford, February 6, 1783, and commenced life a poor orphan boy. By indomitable perseverance and energy, he pushed himself ahead, without influential friends, and while "before the mast" in the whaling service made himself prominent by his daring and dangerous exploits.

"In 1812 he enrolled himself as a volunteer in Captain Storr's company of militia, in New Bedford, but was never in active service.

"As an affectionate husband, fond parent, kind friend, and good neighbor, he will be missed from his family and from the community in which he lived.

"Six years ago he had an attack of paralysis which affected the right half of his body, and since that time has been confined to his room, and exhibited great patience and fortitude during his long confinement. He was a sincere Christian, and died in the hope of a glorious immortality."

So much for obituary, and so much for the record of accomplishment of this man who sailed the seas over a century ago when our country was still young. We have had some glimpses of the man himself, as well, but a more intimate view of him would be welcome. In the future perhaps some of his letters or journals may come to light, along with pictures of his ships, and at that time any person may write a more satisfying account of the Captain Nash DeCost who was so prominent a figure in our early mercantile marine.

APPENDIX

DeCost Genealogy

- Nov. 7 1777 John DeCost married Abigail Peas at Dartmouth, Mass.
 They had
 ? John DeCost (died Nov. 24 1797 on board Sch. *Eliza*)
 Nash DeCost born Feb 6 1783
 died Jan 27 1858
- Apr. 10 1805 Nash DeCost married Betsey Wilber at Middleboro, Mass.
 They had
- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| John DeCost | b. Jan. 8 1806 |
| | d. Apr. 1 1806 |
| Albert DeCost | b. Sep. 2 1808 |
| Franklin DeCost | b. July 13 1811 |
| Eliza N. DeCost | b. Aug. 24 1813 |
| | d. Aug. 10 1846 |
| Pamela DeCost | b. Nov. 3 1815 |
| | d. Nov. 1862 |
| Sarah W. DeCost | b. Feb. 1 1818 |
| | d. Feb. 12 1900 |
| Abby DeCost | b. Dec. 30 1820 |
| John DeCost | b. Sep. 20 1823 |
| | d. Mar. 17 1824 |
| John DeCost | b. May 16 1823 |
| | d. Oct. 1 1826 |
- Sept. 5 1839 Nash DeCost m. Hannah (Wolcott) H. Coe, widow of Chauncey Coe
- Oct. 1 1840 Eliza DeCost married Charles John Burnett, Jr. at Skaneateles New York
 They had
- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Elizabeth DeCost Burnett | b. July 12 1841 |
| | d. May 3 1900 |
| Albert DeCost Burnett | d. Aug. 4 1862 |
- July 19 1838 Pamela DeCost married Samuel Brainerd of New York at Skaneateles, N. Y.
- Aug. 16 1842 Abby DeCost married William V. Porter of New York son of James Porter

Ship York Nash De Cost From New York towards Liverpool

H	K	IK	Pages	Notes	Remarks
1	9		676	Th M	Departure on board Thursday May 17 th 1827
2	9				Commenced with strong breeze, gently in the
3	10				
4	10				
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7	11		678		Thought fresh gales to be in the
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LOG OF THE SHIP YORK

MAY 1827

and

OCTOBER 1827

Ship York Nast DeCost Laying in New York

Monday
May 7th
1827 Commences with light breezes from the south^d with rain
At 9 the wind hauled to the west--
At 4 the pilot came on board. Cast off from Pine St. Wharf and
proceeded down to Staten Island. At 6 come to an anchor with
the small bower. Six riggers employed and still on board. Ends
with moderate breezes and clear pleasant weather.

Tuesday
May 8th Commences with fresh breezes from the west^d & clear weather
At ½ past 10 the Capt & passengers came on board, the riggers
went ashore. At 11 got under weigh & proceeded to sea with a
fine breeze from the west^d. So ends the civil day.

*Ship York, Nash DeCost from New York towards Liverpool May 1827**Remarks on board Wednesday May 9th 1827*

Commences with brisk breezes from the west^d & clear weather
At 1 p.m. the pilot left us. At 2 Sandy Hook light house bore
West 6 miles from which the departure is taken. At 3 the light
boat W.S.W.—
Made all sail.
Men employed securing the anchors and clearing decks
At 5 p.m. t'cked ship and shifted studding sail
Middle part stedy breezes & pleasant
At 11 a.m. sent up the main skysail yard & set the sail
Latter part strong breezes & clear weather.

171 Dist
per log

1 day out

Latt^d Obs^d 40° — 00' North
Var N½ pt.

Remarks Thursday May 10th

Commences with fresh gales & smoaky weather
Several sail in sight
At 5 p.m. in lower studding sail mizen top gale^t s^{ie} and royals
At 8 set lower studding sail & royals
Midnight strong breezes & cloudy
All hands employed at necessary work
Latter part fresh breezes & hazy weather

223 per
log

2 Days out

Latt^d Obs^d 30° — 47' North
Var n ½ pt.

APPENDIX

Course	Wind	<i>Remarks on board Friday May 11th 1827</i>	
E b S	SSW	Commences with fresh breezes & cloudy weather Midnight squally took in the studding sails & top gall' sails 3 a.m. strong gales double reef ^d the T sails & reef ^d the main sail 8 reef ^d the foresail 10 a.m. more moderate Made sail accordingly Latter part fresh breezes & squally weather	
173	per log	3 days out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 40° — 05' North
EbS½S	SW	Commences with strong breezes & squally weather At 6 p.m. more moderate out all studding sails Midnight strong breezes & clear weather. All hands employed at necessary work &c Latter steady breezes & pleasant weather	
192	per log	4 days out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 30° — 40' North
		<i>Remarks on board Sunday May 13th 1827</i>	
EbS	NW	Commences with steady breezes & pleasant weather At 6 p.m. the wind hauled to the East ^d In all studding sails 8 a breeze sprung up from SE Squally in royals & T gall' sails 11 p.m. strong gales double reef ^d the topsails & furled mainsail jib & spanker At 2 a.m. a heavy squall from S W with sharp lightning 4 a.m. more moderate out all reefs & set studdingsails Latter part fine pleasant weather	
		5 days out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 39° — 53' North
		<i>Remarks on board Monday May 14th 1827</i>	
EbS	South	Commences with moderate breezes & fine pleasant weather At 6 p.m. took in studding sails Midnight light winds & variable At 6 a.m. squally in top gall' sails & single reef ^d the top sails At 8 tacked to the South ^d & East ^d — Latter part moderate breezes & rainy weather	
90	per log	6 days out	No Obs ⁿ
SEW	ESE	<i>Remarks on board Tuesday May 15th 1827</i>	
		Commences with light baffling winds &c Out all reefs & set top gall' sails At 4 p.m. the wind hauled to the south ^d Wore round to the east ^d At 8 heavy rain & squally in Top gall' sails & double reef ^d the Top sails— 11 p.m. moderate breezes & clear weather out all reefs & set top gall' sails & Fore T mast stud ^e sails. Latter part moderate breezes & fine pleasant weather	
91	per log	7 days out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 40° — 23' North

APPENDIX

		<i>Remarks on board Wednesday May 16th 1827</i>	
E½N	Bafling	Commences with moderate breezes & pleasant weather At 9 squally with rain in Top gall ^t sails spanker & reef ^d the mizen top sail At midnight rain & baffling winds &c 6 a.m. strong breezes & squally double reef ^d the top sail & furled the jib 10 more moderate made sail Latter part fresh breezes & pleasant	
90 per log		8 days out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 41° 03' North
		<i>Remarks on board Thursday May 17th 1827</i>	
ESE	SWbW	Commences with strong breezes & squally weather Midnight fresh gales & clear weather Latter part steady breezes & pleasant All sail set to the best advantage	
202 per log		9 days out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 40° 12' North
		<i>Remarks on board Friday May 18th 1827</i>	
E½S	WSW	Commences with strong breezes & squally weather All sail set to the best advantage. Midnight fresh gales with sharp lightning Took in some of the light sails &c. All hands employed at various work &c. Latter part moderate breezes & pleasant	
202 per log		10 days out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 42° 07' North
		<i>Remarks on board Saturday May 19th 1827</i>	
E	WSW	Commences with favoring gales & pleasant weather Every Rag set Middle part squally with thunder & Lightning Took in the light sails At 4 a.m. set the light sails Latter part steady breezes & pleasant	
200		11 days out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 43° 04' North
		<i>Remarks on board Sunday May 20th 1827</i>	
E	SW	Commences with strong breezes & fine weather Passed a ship standing to the east ^d Middle part favoring gales clear Latter part strong breezes & hazy weather	
Dist per log		12 days out 242 miles	Latt ^d Obs ^d 44° 33' North Long ^d DR 31° 35' West

H.	K.	IK	Courses	Winds	Remarks on board
1	7	1	East	SE	Monday May 19 th 1837
2	7	1	East	SE	Commenced with fair wind, gale & pleasant weather
3	7	1	East	SE	Very dry & hot.
4	7	1	East	SE	
5	7	1	East	SE	
6	7	1	East	SE	
7	7	1	East	SE	
8	7	1	East	SE	
9	7	1	East	SE	
10	7	1	East	SE	
11	7	1	East	SE	
12	7	1	East	SE	
1	8	1	East	SE	
2	8	1	East	SE	
3	8	1	East	SE	
4	8	1	East	SE	
5	8	1	East	SE	
6	8	1	East	SE	
7	8	1	East	SE	
8	8	1	East	SE	
9	8	1	East	SE	
10	8	1	East	SE	
11	8	1	East	SE	
12	8	1	East	SE	
13	8	1	East	SE	
14	8	1	East	SE	
15	8	1	East	SE	
16	8	1	East	SE	
17	8	1	East	SE	
18	8	1	East	SE	
19	8	1	East	SE	
20	8	1	East	SE	

H.	K.	IK	Courses	Winds	Remarks on board
1	10	1	East	SE	Tuesday May 20 th 1837
2	8	1	East	SE	Commenced with strong breeze & fine weather
3	8	1	East	SE	
4	8	1	East	SE	
5	8	1	East	SE	
6	8	1	East	SE	
7	8	1	East	SE	
8	8	1	East	SE	
9	8	1	East	SE	
10	8	1	East	SE	
11	8	1	East	SE	
12	8	1	East	SE	
13	8	1	East	SE	
14	8	1	East	SE	
15	8	1	East	SE	
16	8	1	East	SE	
17	8	1	East	SE	
18	8	1	East	SE	
19	8	1	East	SE	
20	8	1	East	SE	
21	8	1	East	SE	
22	8	1	East	SE	
23	8	1	East	SE	
24	8	1	East	SE	
25	8	1	East	SE	
26	8	1	East	SE	
27	8	1	East	SE	
28	8	1	East	SE	
29	8	1	East	SE	
30	8	1	East	SE	

APPENDIX

		<i>Remarks on board Monday May 21st 1827</i>
E	WSW	Commences with strong breezes & squally attended with some rain Middle part strong breezes & squally &c. Latter part continues the same as above
per log	233	13 days out Latt ^d Obs ^d 45° 58' North
		<i>Remarks on board Tuesday May 22nd 1827</i>
E½S	WSW	Commences with fresh breezes & thick foggy weather Middle part strong breezes & squally Latter part fresh breezes & fine pleasant weather
214 m	per log	14 days out Latt ^d Obs ^d Indiff ^t 47° 07' North
		<i>Remarks on board Wednesday May 23rd 1827</i>
E½S	WSW	Commences with fresh breezes & pleasant weather All necessary sail set Middle part strong breezes & cloudy Latter part continues the same as above
240 m	per log	15 days out Latt ^d Obs ^d 48° 29' North
		<i>Remarks on board Thursday May 24th 1827</i>
E	NW	Commences with strong breezes & squally with rain At 1 p.m. the wind hauled to the N W took in starboard stud- ding sails At 8 p.m. squally took in the top gall ^t sails & single reef ^d T sails Midnight strong gales reef ^d the main sail Latter part strong breezes & squally
241	per log	16 days out Latt ^d Obs ^d 50° 20' North
		<i>Remarks on board Friday May 25th 1827</i>
E½N	NW	Commences with strong gales & squally attended with rain At 4 P.M. reef ^d the main sail Midnight more moderate made sail accordingly At 6 a.m. made the land bearing E N E 3 leagues per compass 8 Cape Clear N. N. E. 2 leagues Latter part moderate breezes & pleasant
		17 days out No Latt ^d this day
		<i>Remarks on board Saturday May 26th 1827</i>
E	NNW	Commences with fresh breezes & squally attended with rain At 6 p.m. Ballicotton Island N b W 3 leagues At 12 midnight Waterford light N b E 3 leagues Salter floating light ENE Moderate breezes & fine pleasant weather At 1 a.m. the Salter floating light N ¼ E dist ^{ncc} 2 leagues At ½ past 5 a.m. Tuskar light house W N W 3 leagues Latter part moderate breezes & pleasant
		18 days out

H	K	IK	Course	Winds	Remarks
1	10	1	East	W S W	Monitors on board Monday May 21 st 1827
2	10	1			Commenced with strong breeze & squally weather with
3	10	1			some rain, -----
4	10	1			
5	10	1			
6	10	1			
7	10	1			
8	10	1			
9	10	1			
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91	10	1			
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93	10	1			
94	10	1			
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96	10	1			
97	10	1			
98	10	1			
99	10	1			
100	10	1			

APPENDIX

Remarks on board Sunday May 27th 1827

NEbE½E SW Commences with moderate breezes & pleasant
 At 2 p.m. made Anglesea bearing N E b E per compass
 At 8 p.m. the Pilot came on board
 Midnight moderate breezes & pleasant
 At 6 a.m. hove too for the tide &c.
 Latter part moderate breezes from the west^d
 Thus ends the Passage all hands well

Ship York laying in Princess Dock Liverpool May 1827

Monday Commences with fresh breezes from the S W
 May 28th At 12 midnight hauled into Princess Dock
 Ends fresh breezes & squally with rain
 N.B. John Cruise James Lamb John Smith James Wilson absent
 from the ship

Ship York Nash DeCost from Liverpool towards N. York

Wednesday Commences with light air & calms At 9 A. M. hauled out of
 Oct 24th Princess Dock. At ½ past 11 the steamboat took us in tow Pro-
 1827 ceeded down to the Floating light Ends light breezes from the
 NW & calm.

Thursday Commences with moderate breezes from the SW
 Oct 25 At 5 the Pilot left us 1 mile outside of the floating light. Made
 all sail & stood to the north
 Midnight brisk breezes & pleasant
 4 A.M. Holy head light South 2 leagues per compass—
 Wind SW thick & foggy
 At ½ past 10 tacked to the East^d
 Meridian tacked to the West^d
 Ends fresh breezes squally

No Obs.

Remarks on Board Friday Oct. 26th 1827

WbN SW Commences with fresh breezes & squally
 4 P.M. tacked to the South^d & East^d
 Strong gales Double Reef^d the top sails
 8 tacked to the West^d)
 10 do SE^d)
) Strong gales
 Midnight ——— WSW)
 4 A.M. ——— East^d)
 7 A.M. ——— West^d)
 Latter part more moderate out reefs

Latt^d Obs^d 52° 19' N

APPENDIX

		<i>Remarks on Board Saturday Oct 27th</i>
WSW	South	Commences with fresh breezes & cloudy At ½ past two P.M. tacked to the SE Wexford bearing SWbW per compass 6 Tuskar Light NNW 3 leagues from which the departure is taken Midnight fresh gales & squally with rain 4 A.M. out studding sails Latter part moderate breezes & squally 3 days out No Obs ⁿ
		<i>Remarks on Board Sunday Oct. 28</i>
W	SbW	Commences with fresh breezes & rain Midnight light airs & variable 2 A.M. a breeze from SE Out all stud ^e sails Latter part strong breezes from the East ^d No Obs.
		<i>Remarks on Board Monday Oct 29th</i>
WbN½N	East	Commences with strong gales & squally 2 P.M. strong gales from the East ^d In studding sails & double reef ^d the F— top sails & reef ^d the courses 3 P.M. the top sail tye parted & carried away— the M T sail yard in the slings Employed refitting a spare yard 8 A.M. sent the yard up & bent the sail Ends fresh gales & squally 5 days out No Obs
		<i>Remarks on Board Tuesday Oct 30th</i>
WbN½N	East	Commences with strong gales & squally Midnight steady breezes 2 A.M. more moderate ont reefs 8 A.M. out all stud ^e sails Latter steady breezes & cloudy 6 days out Latt Obs 47° 22'
		<i>Remarks on Board Wednesday Oct 31st</i>
WbN½N	ESE	Commences with fresh breezes & squally with rain, all sail set to the best advantage Midnight steady breezes & pleasant Latter part fresh breezes & squally 7 days out Latt Obs ^d 46° 26'

APPENDIX

Remarks on Board Thursday Nov 1st

WbN SE Commences with steady breezes & cloudy
Middle part fresh breezes & squally
Every rag set to a favouring gale
Latter part pleasant
8 days out Latt^d Obs^d 45° 30' N

Remarks on Board Friday Nov^r 2nd

WbN SE Commences with steady breezes & fine pleasant
Middle part fresh breezes & steady
Latter part moderate breezes & (—) clouds
9 days out Long^d Obs^d 34° 45' W
Latt^d Obs^d 44° 37' N

Remarks on Board Saturday Nov 3rd

WbN SE Commences with moderate breezes & fine pleasant weather
Middle continues the same
Latter steady &c
Latt^d 44° 05' N

Remarks on Board Sunday 4th

WbN½N East Commences with brisk breezes & fine pleasant weather
Midnight moderate breezes & variable Jibed & shifted stud^s
sails accordingly
Latter part strong breezes from the South^d
10 days out Latt^d 43° 55'

Remarks on Board Monday Nov 5th

WbN½N South Commences with fresh gales & squally
In light sails
Midnight the wind shifted to the NW in a heavy squall
Double reef^d the top sails & tacked to the West^d
Latter part more moderate made sail accordingly
11 days out Latt^d Obs^d 43° 13'

Ship York Nash De Cost from Liverpool towards N Y^k

Remarks on Board Tuesday Nov 6th

SbW West Commences with fresh gales & cloudy
4 P.M. under Single reef^d Top sails & top gall^s sails tacked to
the NW
10 P.M. strong gales from the South^d
Close reef^d the Top sails &c.—
Midnight heavy gales reef^d the fores^t
6 A.M. more moderate out reefs
Latter strong gales & Squally
12 days out Latt^d 43° 19'
Long^d 45° 5'

APPENDIX

		<i>Remarks on Board Wednesday Nov 7th</i>	
NNW	West	Commences strong gales from the West ^d 2 P.M. reef ^d the main sail & double reef ^d the main Top sail. In spanker & Jib Midnight more moderate made sail accordingly 8 A.M. Strong gales & Squalls Close reef ^d the Top sail & furled the main sail Meridian took in the Fore top sail Latter part heavy gales 13 days out	Latt ^d 45° 13'
		<i>Remarks on Board Thursday Nov 8th</i>	
NbW	West	Commences with strong gales & heavy Squalls— Under a reef Fore sail Close reef ^d main Top sail & mizen Staysail— 12 Midnight set the Fore top sail 4 A.M. more moderate Set the M sail & other sails accordingly 6 A.M. the wind hauled to the SW tacked to the West ^d Latter part strong gales from the S&W 14 days out	No Obs ⁿ
		<i>Remarks on Board Friday Nov 9th</i>	
W½N	South	Commences with strong gales & heavy squalls 3 P.M. heavy gales from the South ^d took in the Main Sail & close reef ^d the Top Sails 8 P.M. gale increasing took in the Fore & Mizen top Sail. Midnight heavy gales &c. 4 A.M. more moderate Made Sail 15 days out	Latt ^d 45° 42' N
		<i>Remarks on board Saturday Nov 10th</i>	
West	South	Commences with light winds & variable 3 P.M. the wind hauled to the South ^d — Midnight fresh gales & Squally 5 A.M. Sounded in 65 fathoms. Latter part brisk breezes & pleasant 16 days out	Latt ^d 45° 37' N Long ^d 49° 20' West
		<i>Remarks on board Sunday Nov 11th</i>	
NbW		Commences with strong breezes & a heavy sea 4 P.M. tacked to the South ^d — Latter part light airs & calm Caught several Cod fish. 17 days out	Latt ^d 44 — 54

APPENDIX

		<i>Remarks on board Monday Nov^r 12th 1827</i>	
West	NNW	Commences with light airs & calm.— 1 P.M. the wind Sprung up from the North ^d — Passed the Brig Palmer of Boston 8 fresh gales & Squally Double reef ^d the Top sails 4 A.M. out reef. 18 days out	No Obs ⁿ
		<i>Remarks on board Tuesday Nov^r 13th</i>	
SWbW	NWbW	Commences with light airs & variable 12 Midnight a breeze sprung from the South ^d Set fore top M ^t stud Sail Latter part strong breezes & squally 19 out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 42° 43' N Long ^d 55° 6' West
		<i>Remarks on board Nov^r 14th</i>	
WbN½N	SSE	Commences with fresh gales & clear weather 4 P.M. up main royal yard & set top mast & lower stud ^t sail Midnight fresh gales & squally 4 A.M. double reef ^d the top sails & furled the main sail 9 A.M. shipped a heavy sea which washed the quarter boat & quarter board on the starboard side Gale increasing in fore top said wind ESE blowing hard Gales & violent squalls — the ship shipping much water. 20 out	
		<i>Remarks on board Thursday Nov^r 15th</i>	
NWbW	South	Commenee with hard gales Set the fore top sail close reef ^d 4 P.M. made sail accordingly Midnight set mizen top sail 8 out all reefs & set top gall ^t sails spoke the Brig — from Am- sterdam bound to New York. Latter part moderate & pleasant 21 out	Latt ^d 43° 06'
		<i>Remarks on board Friday Nov^r 16th</i>	
NWbW	Variable	Commences with light winds & variable 8 P.M. tacked to the SW Midnight brisk breezes & cloudy 10 A.M. tacked to the North ^d & West ^d Latter part pleasant 22 out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 42° 23'

APPENDIX

NbW	WbN	<i>Remarks on board Saturday Nov' 17th</i> Commences with brisk breezes & squally 6 P.M. tacked to the South ^d Midnight tacked to the North ^d & West ^d Latter part moderate breezes & cloudy 23 out	No Obs.
NW	Variable	<i>Remarks on board Sunday Nov' 18th</i> Commences with light winds & variable 4 P.M. tacked to the South ^d 6 P.M. tacked to the West ^d 8 P.M. tacked to the South ^d Squally took the first reef in the top sails Midnight squally double reef ^d the top sails & reef ^d the main sail Latter part fresh gales & squally 24 out	Latt ^d 41° 38' N Long ^d Obs ^d 62 — 40 — West
NbE	NWbW	<i>Remarks on board Monday Nov' 19th</i> Commences with fresh breezes & cloudy Latt ^d 41° 24' & Long 63° passed the Brig Rebecca of Salem steering to the West ^d 8 P.M. tacked to the SW Midnight more moderate out reefs & set top gall ^t sails 8 A.M. wind favourable out Studding sails & royals 25 days out	Latt ^d Obs ^d 40° 24'
W½S	North	<i>Remarks on board Tuesday Nov' 20th</i> Commences with fresh breezes & squally wind inclining westerly In Studding & light sails 4 P.M. in Top gall ^t Sails & double reef ^d the top Sails 6 Reef ^d the main sail Throughout the night Strong gales & Squalls of snow & rain. Apparently in the Gulf Stream Latter Squally & variable 26 out	No Obs.
<i>Ship York Nash DeCost from Liverpool towards N York</i>			
WSW	NW	<i>Remarks on board Wednesday Nov' 21st</i> Commences with fresh gales & Squalls of hail 8 P.M. double reef ^d the Top Sails & reef ^d the Main Sail Midnight more moderate out reefs & set the top gall ^t Sails Latter part Strong gales &c. 27 out	Latt ^d 38° 55'

APPENDIX

<i>Remarks on board Thursday Nov^r 22nd</i>	
WSW NW	Commences with fresh gales & Squally with hail & rain 10 P.M. took in the top gall ^t sails Midnight heavy Squalls &c. 10 A.M. heavy gales from the NW Close reef ^d the top sail & handed the main Sail Latter heavy gales Split the Fore Staysail 28 days out Latt^d Obs^d 37° 47'
<i>Remarks on board Friday Nov^r 23rd</i>	
WSW NW	Commences with heavy gales & Squalls of Snow Midnight hard gales passed two Ships bound to the East ^d 2 A.M. wore Ship to the South ^d & West ^d Latter part same as above 29 out Latt^d 37° 07'
<i>Remarks on board Saturday Nov^r 24th</i>	
North WNW	Commences with Strong & Squally Midnight hard gales &c. 8 A.M. took in the Fore & mizen top Sails Latter part strong gales 30 out No Obsⁿ
<i>Remarks on board Sunday Nov^r 25</i>	
NbE NW	Commences with hard gales & heavy Squall Midnight continues the same Latter part hard gales & heavy Squalls — of hail 31 days out No Obs
<i>Remarks on board Monday Nov^r 26th</i>	
NNE NW	Commences with hard gales & heavy Squalls set the Fore Top Sail Midnight more moderate made sail accordingly 8 A.M. wore ship to the WSW Latter part more ———— made sail 32 day No Obs.
<i>Remarks on board Tuesday Nov^r 27th</i>	
WSW NW	Commences with strong breezes with Squalls of Snow & hail Midnight fresh breezes & Squally Latter part strong gales 33 days out

APPENDIX

WbS NWbN	<i>Remarks on board Wednesday Nov^r 28th</i>
	Commences with strong gales from the North ^d & West ^d 1 P.M. double reef ^d the top sails & reef ^d the main sail 4 P.M. a sudden flaw struck & carried away the jib boom, close to the cap. Midnight more moderate out reefs Latter part moderate breezes & fine pleasant weather Passengers all on deck for the first time this 11 days 34 days out Latt^d Obs^d 39° 16'
WSW NW	<i>Remarks on board Thursday Nov^r 29th 1827</i>
	Commences with moderate breezes & fine pleasant weather, all sail set — by the wind Midnight light airs inclining to calm 4 P.M. a breeze sprung from the South ^d out studding sail up main Royal yard Latter brisk breezes & cloudy No Obs.
NW½N South	<i>Remarks on board (Thursday) Nov^r 30th</i>
	Commences with brisk breezes & cloudy Sounded 27 fathoms 8 P.M. strong gales & Squally — in top gall ^s sails & hauled the courses up— 12 Midnight double reef ^d the Top sails & reef ^d the courses— 3 A.M. heavy gales & thick rainy weather close reef ^d the top sails & furled the course— 12 fathoms water Ware ship occasionally— 11 A.M. made the highlands bearing NW — Wore ship to the East ^d & made sail Ends thick foggy weather No Obs.
Friday Dec. 1st	<i>Commences with light airs from the S & E^d</i>
	2 P. M. the weather cleared away — bore up for Sandy hook 4 Sandy hook light house WNW Took a Pilot 6 wind hauled to the NW & anchored the light bearing SbE per compass Thus ends the passage. 36 days out Three men sick
Saturday Dec. 2nd	<i>Commences with fresh breezes from WNW—</i>
	7 A. M. got under weigh & proceeded up to the City of New — ½ past 9 anchored 11 hauled alongside of the wharf — riggers employed to haul the Ship in Pine St wharf Ends pleasant.

PASSENGER LISTS OF THE SHIP YORK
REPORTED BY
THE NEW YORK EVENING POST

July 12 1825

Packet ship York, Capt. Baker, arrived from London, 38 days, from Cowes, 30 days.

Passengers

Hon. R. Rush Esq., late Ambassador at the Court of)	
St. James, lady and family)
J. Hoffman Esq. daughter and governess	) all of
Mrs. Brown and daughter	) England
Miss Atkinson and servant)
Rev. Mr. West)
W. Cochran of Quebec	
M. Proctor of Montreal	
C. Small, Esq. of York U. C.	

January 9, 1826

Ship York, Nash DeCost, sailed from New York for Liverpool

Mr. William Graham)	
Miss Graham	)	of Philadelphia
Messrs. Jos. Bates)	
Sam'l Taylor	)	of New York
Jacot)	
Jos. Stansfield)	
T. Gibb)	
John Gibb)	
W. Budden	)	of Quebec
R. Stewart)	
Armour)	
Prince)	
John Young)	
John Y. Crooks	)	of Niagara (U. C.)
I. Mason)	
C. S. Rodier)	
F. A. La Rocque	)	of Montreal
Daniel Mc. Naughton)	

April 4 1826

Ship York, Nash DeCost, arrived from Liverpool

Passengers

W. D. Nelson	G. Cauldwell
J. Cooper	J. Taylor
W. B. Ratch	and 7 in the steerage

APPENDIX

May 8 1826

Ship York, Nash DeCost, sailed for Liverpool

Passengers

Mrs. Wm. Roberts & son)	
Mrs. Isaac S. Stone)	
Dr. King and lady)	
Doctor Arnold	)	of New York
Messrs. Robt M'Croskrey)	
James M'Crair)	
Robert M'Crea)	
S. Sands)	
Moses Kent Esq		of Albany
Mr. Alexander Fleming		of Westchester
Mr. Charles Coleman		of England
Mr. Lamson		of Boston
Mr. Frederick Houriet and lady		of Switzerland
Miss Denham		of Ft. George
Mr. Forbes, deputy commissary general		of Canada
Mr. Lawton		of Charleston (S. C.)
Major John N. Williams		of Georgetown (S. C.)
Mr. E. Penney		of Mexico

January 10 1827

Ship York, Nash DeCost, sailed for Liverpool

Passengers

Mrs. Hayes		of Boston
Lt. Bernard, 60th reg. H. B. M. Army)	
Messers. George Sheed)	
°John Forrence	)	of Canada
Ross)	
Chapman)	
Frothingham)	
Charles Cumliffe		of Virginia
P. Schlesinger		
°Possibly Torrence		

May 8 1827

Ship York, Nash DeCost, sailed for Liverpool

Passengers

Mr. Preserved Fish and lady)	
Mrs. Castilia)	
Messers. G. C. Howland)	
J. R. Townsend	)	of New York
R. H. Nevins)	
B. Hempstead)	
Mr. Toole)	
Dr. Drake)	

APPENDIX

Mr. Andrews and lady of Middletown, Conn.

Mr. Watkinson and lady

Miss J. Wells

Mr. Huntington and lady of Hartford

Lt. G. R. Barry, U. S. N., bearer of dispatches

Messrs. Fernandez)
 Ruiz) of Havana

William Hebblewhite

Mr. Lauder of England

P. Wright of Natchez

December 1 1827

Ship York, Nash DeCost, arrived from Liverpool

Passengers

Mr. and Mrs. Lanfear

Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer

Mrs. M. Scannill

Miss E. England

Miss Martin

Dr. T. L. Ogier

Messers. M. Robinson

 J. Ratcliff

 J. Corrie

 Wm. Wallis

January 8 1828

Ship York, Nash DeCost, sailed from New York

Passengers

Messers.

 Edward Norris)

 Richard Norris) of Baltimore

 Hamilton of Queenston

 Joseph Stansfield)

 Jameson) of Montreal

 Stebhens)

 James Stansfield)

 Brooks)

 George) of Quebec

 Muson)

 Legge)

 Joseph Roberts)

 Rollo) of New York

 Armstrong)

APPENDIX

March 31 1828

Ship York, Nash DeCost, arrived from Liverpool (Feb. 26)

Passengers

Messers.

D. Daly)
T. L. Butler	) of Canada
R. Roberts)
D. I. Badger)
P. T. Homer	) of Boston
E. Weight)
Geo. Shaw)
E. Ferguson	) of New York
J. DeGroot)
John Harris)
H. Burden	of Troy
Miss Jane	N. H.

May 8 1828

Ship York, Nash DeCost, sailed for Liverpool

Passengers

Carroll Livingston, lady, and servant

Mr. S. H. Simpson, lady and two children

Messers.

Lander

Scott

DeGroot

Mr. Lockhart, lady, children and servant)	
and Madame Carrack	) of New Orleans
Mr. Tainter	of Connecticut
Mr. Nowill	of Kentucky
Mr. and Mrs. Kirkman	of Nashville
Mrs. Miller	of Bedford, Penn.
Mr. Hay	of Edinborough

August 6 1828

Ship York, Nash DeCost, arrived in New York from Liverpool (June 24)

Passengers

Messers.

H. Castro)
S. A. Willoughby)
John R. Townsend	) of New York
Benjamin Drake)
Alfred Wagstaff)
Charles F. Weyman)

APPENDIX

Geo. C. Burrows)	
John Geo. Edwards	)	of England
Chas. Creighton		of Philadelphia
F. G. de Estrada		of Mexico
Gustave Weisse)	
Henry Dillon	)	of France
6 in the steerage		

September 8 1828

Ship York, Nash DeCost, sailed for Liverpool

Passengers

John Belden	of Mexico
Albers	of Germany
O. Riely	of St. Thomas
Dr. Griffiths	of Carthagenia
Mr. Logan	of Lima
Mr. Stoakes	of England
Rev. Dr. Rowan	of New York
Mr. H. De Grant	

December 3 1828

Ship York, Nash DeCost, arrived from Liverpool (Oct. 25)

Passengers

L. Trapman
A. Brower
Chas. Kneeland
Jas. Kain
J. Sochemila
J. M. Gutienet d'Estrada
and 7 in the steerage

(Nov. 12th John Williams, of England, fell overboard and was drowned)

January 9 1829

Ship York, Nash DeCost, sailed from New York

Passengers

Mr. Mayer	of Liverpool
Mr. P. W. Doyle	of London
Mr. J. Young	of Niagara
Mr. Smith	of Montreal
Mr. Wm. Stevens	"
J. G. M'Kenzie	"
Mr. J. Scott	"
Mr. Ross Winens	of New Jersey
Mr. Herald	of South America
Mr. Levy	of Quebec

APPENDIX

April 16th 1829

Ship York, Nash DeCost, arrived from Liverpool (Feb. 24th)

Passengers

Mr. Thomas Proctor	of New York
Francisco Ponti	of Italy

September 8 1829

Ship York, Nash DeCost, sailed for Liverpool

Passengers

Mrs. DeCost and Miss DeCost	of New York
Mr. Pickering	of New Haven
Mr. Edmund and Mr. H. G. Mayer	of Germany
Mr. Mathieson	of Mexico
Mr. Harris	of Canada

November 23 1829

Ship York, Nash DeCost, arrived at New York from Liverpool

Passengers

Rev. W. Boulton and lady
Mrs. Charlotte Berrian
Mrs. N. DeCost and daughter
Miss Sarah Ogelen
Messers.

John Gibson
R. Willis
R. Dempsey
E. Gee
C. Berrian
S. J. Pooley
and 41 in the steerage

August 7 1829

Ship York, DeCost, arrived from Liverpool

Passengers

Messrs. A. Bryce)	
E. W. Hoskins	)	of New York
C. Hale		Canada
A. De Campos		
C. Potter		
W. E. Huggee		
John Abbott		
and 6 in the Steerage		

January 8th 1830

Ship York, DeCost, sailed for Liverpool

Passengers

Messers. Cochran)	
Cornelius Berrien	)	of New York
Mr. Mason)	
J. T. Badgley	)	Montreal
Chs. Stewart)	
Edw. O'Hara	)	Quebec
Charles Noyes)	
Henry Trender)	
Joseph Smith		Cornwall England
Mr. Goldsmith		Kentucky
Mr. Hardy		England
Mr. Wood		Liverpool
Mr. Olivicromer		Sweden
Lt. Jones		British Navy
Mr. Coates		Canada

April 7th 1830

Packet Ship York, DeCost, arrived from Liverpool

Passengers

Mrs. Hamilton
 Messers. G. Dennistoun
 R. Winans
 C. Berrian
 and 2 in the Steerage

May 8th 1830

Ship York, Thompson, sailed for Liverpool

Passengers

Mr. Gerald, lady, servant)	
Miss Gerard	)	of New York
Mr. Thos. Dean & lady)	
Mr. Berrian & lady)	
Messers. Frederick Marx		Richmond
Robt. Rapier		
Michael Jackson		Philadelphia
Geo. A. Whiley		Canada
R. H. Alexander)	
H. McKim)	Baltimore
Mr. Edmondson		Montreal
Mr. Briggs)	
J. W. Lindon)	New York
Mr. Johnson		Havana

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Ship York, Captain Cheever, sailed for San Francisco, from Boston, April 1, 1849.*

Passengers

John W. Cartwright	Enoch Soule
C. John Hall	E. Wadsworth of Duxbury
J. H. Barnes	Joseph Trumbull of Worcester
C. W. Smith	Wm. H. Barrett
F. W. Whittemore	Ferdinand C. Ewer of Nantucket
Charles H. Hubbard	Arthur O. Gay of Hingham
Alfred Wheelwright	John Colby of Lowell
Nathaniel Welles	John A. Spooner of Plymouth
N. H. Piper	John Cheever of Saugus
Ed. M. Demie	Sydney Ainsworth of Barnstable
George W. Winor	R. H. Hooper
William H. Thayer	I. Littlefield
Thomas R. Campbell	H. T. Burr of Charlestown
S. E. Teschemacher	Theo. Bassett of New Bedford
I. B. Thompson	Clement Small of East Boston
J. W. Cartwright, Jr.	I. M. Williams
Robert R. Lear	George Bailey of Wiscasset
Adoma L. Melvin of Boston	F. B. Clark of Wells Me.
George N. Cheever (master) of Salem	C. A. Swift of Monmouth Me.
Geo. Drew	

**Daily Advertiser*, Boston, Mass.

NOTES

Ship measurements have been taken from the following source:

Ship Registers of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Compiled from original documents stored in the New Bedford Customs House. The National Archives Project, Work Projects Administration.

1--Ship *Joseph*

Registered at New Bedford November 9, 1803

Built at Somerset in 1793

Tons: 241 38/95

Length: 86 ft. 3 in.

Breadth: 25 ft., 5 in.

Depth: 12 ft., 8½ in.

Two decks, three masts, square stern, no galleries, no figurehead. Previously registered at New York, March 7, 1801.

Master: Nash DeCost

Owners: Nash DeCost, mariner, Henry Huttlestone, Paul Delano, Caleb Jenne Jr. New Bedford.

2--Brig *Hazard*

Registered at New Bedford August 8, 1804

Built at Georgetown in 1796

Tons: 169 78/95

Length: 76 ft.

Breadth: 22 ft., 9 in.

Depth: 11 ft., 4½ in.

Two decks, two masts, square stern, no galleries, no figurehead. Previously registered at Bath, Maine, July 19, 1802.

Master: Nash DeCost

Owners: Nash DeCost, mariner, Joseph Howland, John Howland, Jonathan Allen, New Bedford.

3--Ship *Averick*

Rig: Ship

Hailing Port: New Bedford

Register: June 22, 1805

Built at Westport, Mass. 1805

Tonnage: 322 44/95

Length: 103 ft., 2 in.

Breadth: 26 ft., 6 in.

Depth: 13 ft., 3 in.

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Two decks, three masts, square stern, no figurehead.

Master: Nash D' Cort

Owners: William Ross, John Parker, New Bedford

Surveyor: Rounsevel Spooner

Note: Lost on the Nore Sands, England, in 1812

4—Ship *Euphrates* of New Bedford

Registered at New Bedford June 22, 1809

Built at New Bedford in 1809

Rig: Ship

Hailing port: New Bedford

Tonnage: 364 69 95

Length: 103 ft., 9½ in.

Breadth: 28 ft., 3 in.

Depth: 14 ft., 1½ in.

Two decks, three masts, square stern, no galleries, no figurehead.

Master: Nash DeCost

Owners: Cornelius Grinnell, Preserved Fish, Abraham Gifford, Ezra Smith, William Howland, James Howland, merchants, New Bedford.

Master carpenter: Abraham Gifford

Surveyor: Joseph Grinnell

Note: The 1827 and 1830 registrations show Nash DeCost as an owner.

Her agents advertised the *Euphrates* as coppered and copper fastened, with particularly comfortable and spacious accommodations for passengers.

Llewellyn Howland, whose ancestor, Edward W. Howland, was an owner of the *Euphrates*, says that she was built by Hillman Brothers of New Bedford from white oak cut on Naushon Island.

5—U. S. Dist. Court for Rhode Island — June 1813 Term

Ship *Euphrates* and Cargo

In this case Justice Story held to be forfeit a part of the cargo which was consigned to British citizens. He, therefore, ordered the goods in question sold and the proceeds delivered to the captors on bail.

The defendant, who held an assignment of the goods appealed the case to the U. S. Supreme Court which upheld the decision of the lower court.

See 8 Cranch, 385, 1814.

6—On April 25, 1819, the April packet ship *Amity*, Maxwell, the ship *Euphrates*, Stoddard, and the ship *Manhattan*, Maey, all arrived at New York, twenty-one days from Liverpool.

See *New York Evening Post*, April 26, 1819.

7—Hanging in the Old Dartmouth Historical Society and Whaling Museum is a drawing by B. Russell 1874, of the *Shenandoah* destroying the whale ships off Cape Thaddeus, but the *Euphrates* unfortunately is represented by no more than a puff of smoke on the horizon. A model of the *Euphrates* is to be seen at the State Street Trust Company in Boston. It was made

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during her early whaling days, at which time she had a white band on her sides below her bulwarks, stern ports, and a white star on her billet head. A photograph of the model appears in "Leaves from the Log of the State Street Trust Company."

8--Schooner *Fenelon* of Fairhaven

Registered at New Bedford August 30, 1819

Built at Rochester in 1815

Tonnage: 115 79/95

Length: 70 ft., 1½ in.

Breadth: 20 ft., 10 in.

Depth: 9 ft., 2 in.

One deck, two masts, square stern, no galleries, no figurehead.

Master: Nash DeCost

Owners: Ansel Gibbs, Rowland Gibbs, Fairhaven: Mathew Mayhew, William LeBaron, Rochester.

9--Brig *William Thacher* of New Bedford

Registered at New Bedford December 4, 1819

Master: Nash DeCost

Owners: Joseph Rotch, William Rotch, Jr., James Arnold, Thomas Rotch, merchants, New Bedford.

10--R. H. Dana mentions the arrival of the *Cortes* at the Island of Juan Fernandez, November 1834. See "Two Years Before the Mast" Chapter VII.

The Public Library at New Bedford has a whaling log of the *Cortes* covering the years 1842 -- 1847. The cover carries this inscription:

Bound to the Pacific Ocean

John W. Hammond, Master

George Howland, Ship *Cortes*

11--On April 26, 1823, David Wilbur of Dartmouth in consideration of \$1000. in services "paid by my daughter Pamela Wilbur" of Dartmouth deeded to the said Pamela "a certain lot of land in the southerly part of the Village of Bedford". This was the same parcel which David Wilbur acquired from Nash DeCost. We know that Betsey DeCost had a sister Pamela Wilbur and suspect that the Pamela mentioned in the deed referred to was she. The Probate records of Bristol County show that David Wilbur of New Bedford died in 1828, that his widow Betsey Wilbur declined administration, and that William Tallman was appointed administrator.

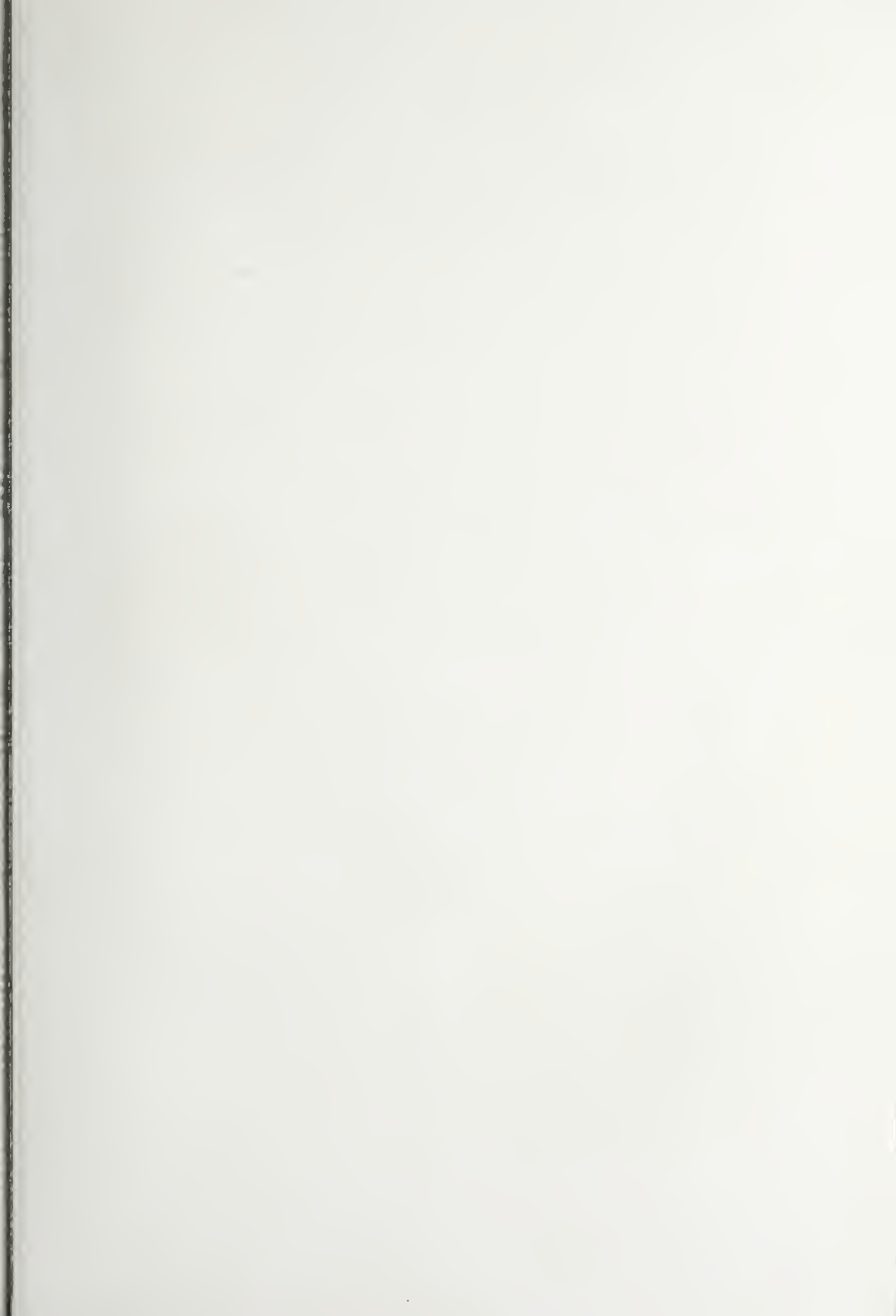
12--N. Y. *Evening Post* March 12, 1825 "The hair-seating settees which surround the dinner table are permanently fixed to the cabin floor."

13--150 volumes, richly bound: see *New York Evening Post* March 12, 1825.

14--*The Emigrants Guide* by William Cobbett, 1829, gives a description of the steerage aboard the packet ships.

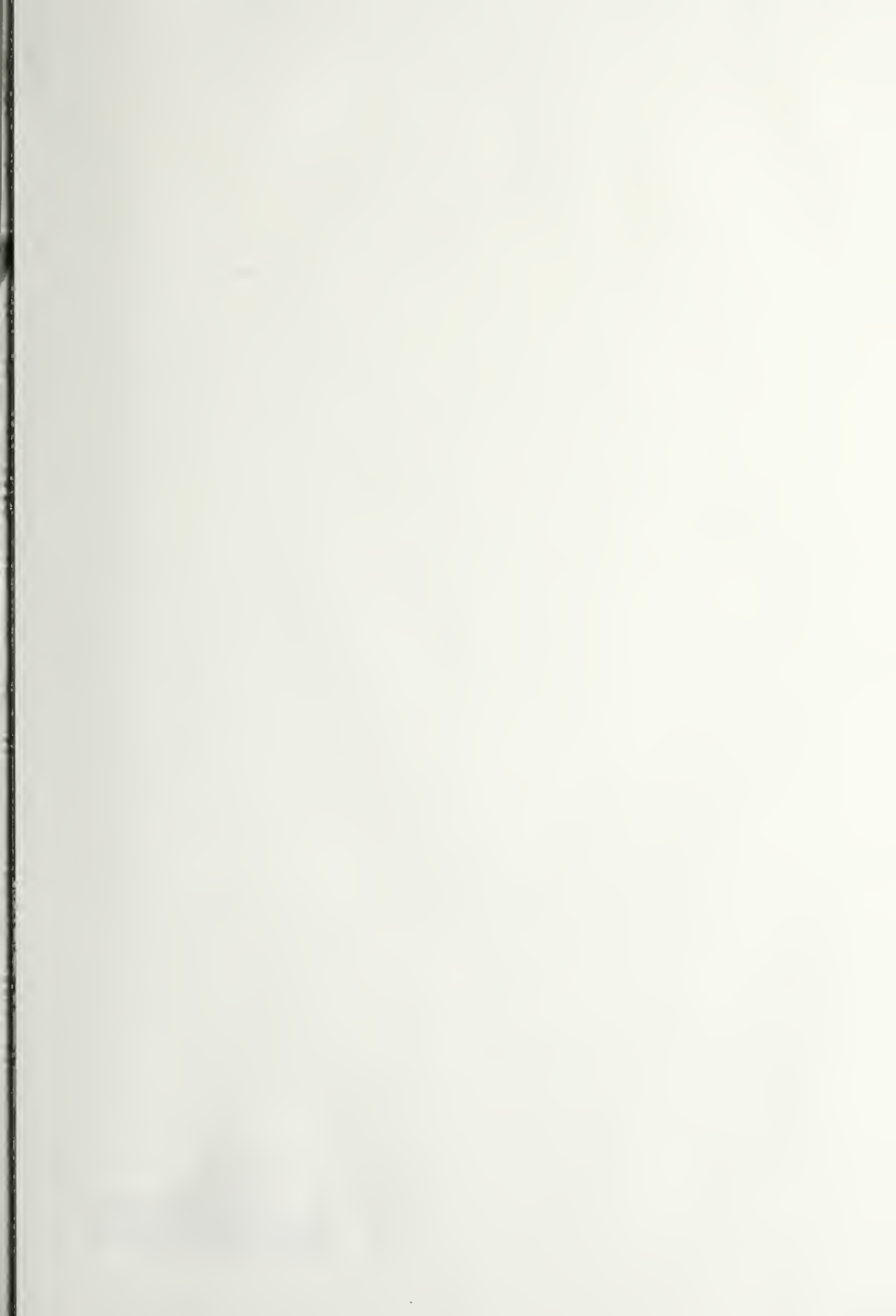
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- 15—On the westward passage from London the *York* seems to have bettered materially her record for the run from Liverpool to New York. On one voyage from London, presumably under Ezra Nye, she made the trip in twenty-four days, while her best from Liverpool to New York was thirty-one days. Moreover, her average for the London run was also the better of the two. When Nash DeCost commenced as a packet captain he was able to bring the *Cortes* into New York twenty-four days or twenty-six days from Liverpool under favorable conditions. All of which suggests that with the command of the *York* he became more conservative, and that he did not drive her as hard as he had the *Cortes*. By the same token it appears that Ezra Nye, starting out as a New York packet captain, drove the *York* harder than had his predecessors.
- 16—Prior to her voyage to San Francisco the ship *York*, Captain Cheever, was registered at the Port of Boston. See Registry of Ships, Boston, 1849, certificate number 156.
- 17—*Silas Richards*; See description, "The Stranger in Liverpool" 1825.
- 18—In George Coggeshall's "History of the American Privateers and Letters of Marque" is a tinted lithograph of the schooner *Rossie* engaging the British mail packet *Princess Amelia*.
The *Rossie* was one of the first Baltimore privateers to get to sea after the declaration of war in 1812, and under the command of Joshua Barney made a very successful cruise.











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